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The Cannibal Chief.



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THE CANNIBAL CHIEF;

OR,

THE MOUNTAIN GUIDE.

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THE CANNIBAL CHIEF ;

OR,

THE MOUNTAIN GUIDE.

CHAPTER I.

DEATH VALLEY.

Before me, throbbing, bathed in lurid glow,
Stretched the desert, a hot, shifting sea,
While round about and high on every side
Rise the gray mountains, with their purple peaks
Cleaving the sky.

A little way up the mountain range, on the north-east side of Death Valley, California, stood three men.

The eldest was a man of apparently sixty years, of rather tall and commanding aspect, with dark-gray eyes and a pleasing expression of countenance. A light palm-leaf hat rested lightly on his dark hair, which was slightly streaked with gray, and a full beard covered his chin. He was leaning on his rifle, gazing dejectedly into the valley below.

Near him stood a young man, dressed in a suit of dark-gray cloth, including cap, and armed with a light double-barreled rifle and a revolver. His dark hair was brushed carelessly back, and clustered in half-rings about his forehead, and his clear, dark eyes, and firm, well-cut mouth, betokened a soul of upright mold and manly daring.

The third person was a bright-looking mulatto about forty years of age.

The party consisted of Mr. Harris, Vernon Boyd, and Cudjo, their servant. All three were gazing below, and upon every face a look of dejection was stamped.

Two hundred feet below them, lay spread out the well-known Death Valley. The wide, hot plain of glaring sand looked desolate beyond power to describe under the rays of the lurid July sun that hung like a red ball in the cloudless sky, the intense, unbroken blue of which contrasted vividly

with the white sandy plain below. The valley is about fifty miles long, and thirty miles wide. It is surrounded by mountains, so steep that no ordinary climber can ascend them, and only at two points is ingress or egress possible. It is devoid of water and vegetation, and destitute of all animal life.

Mr. Harris and his companions, ignorant of the country, had wandered into the valley, and once in, found to their dismay that escape was impossible. In vain had they wandered up and down the glaring sands in search of a place of egress, in vain had they endeavored to climb the mountains; the steep sides baffled all attempts at ascent, and now, after four days' imprisonment in the mountain-guarded desert, they found themselves, faint from hunger and exhaustion, and burning with thirst, bewildered and utterly at a loss what to do. The slender stock of provisions they had carried was exhausted the second day of their stay in the valley, but hunger was far easier to bear than the burning thirst that possessed them. Frequently, in the distance, a treacherous mirage of water appeared to them, but after long tramps in search of it, it proved to be only a delusion. To add to the horror of the place, on almost every hand the bleached and whitened skeletons of men and beasts met their gaze, indicating that at some previous period a large party of hapless beings had met death in this desolate place.* How soon the same fate would be theirs—unless some unexpected way of escape appeared—it was impossible to tell. Certainly, in their present circumstances, to endure long was impossible. Already the "shadow feared of man," seemed to be near.

For a time silence reigned among the trio. Vernon Boyd's manly face wore a deep cloud. He was thinking of Mabel—his Mabel—shy, violet-eyed little Mabel, whose sunny face was ever with him, sleeping or waking. Even now she was drawing near him; every day took something from the distance between them; but he seemed doomed to perish in this miniature desert, without the comfort of knowing that she would ever know his fate. As the thought that they might never again meet came upon him, he bowed his head to hide the expression of pain that passed over his face.

* In the year 1850, a party of eighty-seven persons, with a large number of animals, wandered into the valley and perished. From this circumstance the valley took its name.

Mr. Harris' voice aroused him from his painful reverie.

"Vernon, what is it best to do, now? Your head is younger than mine, and doubtless your brain is clearer. I feel strangely weak."

He leaned against a rugged boulder, and wiped his face with his handkerchief. He was pale and haggard, and his eyes looked unnaturally brilliant. Suffering was producing its legitimate effects.

"I am completely at a loss what to do," replied the younger man, with a deep sigh. "We can only continue our wandering, trusting Providence to open a way of escape."

"Fo' de Lor', dis chile is mi'ty tired o' trampin'," ejaculated Cudjo. "Ain't no use anyhow. Fellar's legs 'll be wored clean off, draggin' up an' down these infunnel mountains, an' back an' fo'th over dis yere hot sand. 'Pears like we's destined to be like the Wanderin' Jew, walkin' foreber and eber."

"I think," said Vernon, "that perhaps we had better keep along the base of the mountains, to the right. I have hopes of finding the place we entered by. Surely there *must* be an opening somewhere."

"We can do no better," said Mr. Harris. "May Heaven guide us aright!"

He arose, and throwing his rifle across his arm, started down the mountain, followed by Vernon and Cudjo, the latter muttering and grumbling at every step. Reaching the valley, they turned to the right, and traveled forward as rapidly as their exhaustion would permit. The afternoon was already half gone, and as the sun sunk lower a cooler atmosphere took the place of the hot, stifling air of midday, rendering exercise less irksome. The hot sand was hard to travel in, and the cloud of dust that continually rose from their steps rendered breathing difficult. Still they pressed on, narrowly watching the mountains for some sign of a pass, until at sunset, faint and exhausted, they paused at the foot of a gray sentinel that shot its hot peak far upward toward the blue, as far from the object of their search as ever. Steep and inaccessible the mountains towered above them, their peaks gilded by the last rays of the sun, which for some time had been invisible to the travelers.

"So far unsuccessful," said Vernon, moodily, gazing off

over the plain which was beginning to grow dusky. "It seems that we are doomed to perish in this place. It will be impossible to endure it much longer."

He threw himself at full length on the ground to rest his tired frame, which ached in every joint. The others followed his example, and overcome with fatigue all were soon in a deep sleep.

Vernon was the first to awake next morning. He started up, confused and bewildered, the remembrance of a troubled dream blending with his waking thoughts, rendering him for a moment unconscious of his surroundings. He gazed around for a moment, then as the memory of his situation returned to him, he rose to his feet. The sun was not visible, though daylight was flooding the valley with a faint rosy hue. His companions were yet sleeping, but as he turned from contemplation of the gorgeous spectacle the rising sun presented, as it came up from behind the mountains, Cudjo stirred, and with a muttered ejaculation, rose to a sitting posture.

"'Clar to gracious, if 'tain't morning," he exclaimed, with a stare. "Don't seem a minit sence I went to sleep. Be'n eatin' all night, in my dreams, an' drinkin' too. Golly ! but I had lots o' good things, an' no end o' water. What *she'd* we do, Marse Vernon ? Dis nig is jest 'cleatly gi'n out. Fo' de Lord, I can't stan' it much longer."

"We must keep traveling as long as we can go," replied the young man, "and then, if we find no outlet, we can add our bones to those we see lying on every side."

"Dis yere is de infunnelest hole !" ejaculated Cudjo, gazing up at the mountains. "'Pears like it war made 'specially for a graveyard. Guess if Dennis was in here now he'd give up. Bet *he* never see sich a place. If I ever git out won't I relate de constrodrinary circumstances ob dis yere adventure ? But dar's no use talkin' 'bout gittin' out. It's my extinguished opinion, dat de ghos's of dese yere bones, is in de valley yit. It's sich an infunnel place dat I don' b'lieve even spooks can git out. Golly, how awful !"

Cudjo shuddered at remembrance of the fearful sights which had everywhere met their gaze since their entrance into the valley, and looked over his shoulder, as if he expected to see a grinning skeleton appear at any moment.

The sound of voices aroused Mr. Harris, and he opened his eyes wearily.

"Another day in this fearful place!" he exclaimed, with a shudder. "Unless we find a pass, of which I have no hope, we shall soon lie beside the other hapless wretches who lie around us. My poor children!"

He brushed the hot tears from his eyes and rose to his feet, so weak and dizzy, that for a moment he could scarcely stand.

"We must keep searching," he said, faintly. "We will not give up until forced to do so."

He picked up his rifle, and the trio moved in the direction of yesterday's journey. They had walked about two miles, when Vernon discovered something a few feet up the mountain side, which appeared like a spring. He lost no time in ascending the hillside, only to be disappointed, for, on reaching the object, it proved to be merely a trail of glistening sand. While they still stood in despondent silence, they were startled at hearing a voice cry out:

"Hello, there, feller-sinners in this vale o' tears!"

All started and looked in the direction whence the sound seemed to proceed. No one was in sight. Cudjo's complexion changed to a creamy hue at sound of the voice, and he rolled his eyes around in ludicrous fear.

"It's a ghos'! Oh, de Lor', it's a ghos'!" he howled. "I tole ye dar was spooks here, an' dat ar's one o' 'em."

Mr. Harris and Vernon continued to look, but saw nothing. Again came the cry:

"Hello, there!"

This time it was nearer, and looking to the left they saw, a little way above them, a queer-looking individual dressed in a close-fitting pair of brown corduroy pantaloons, and a short, gray jacket. A black felt hat, with a crown of extraordinary dimensions, and no rim worth speaking of, covered his head, and a pair of stout boots incased his feet. A rifle nearly as long as himself rested on his shoulder, and a long knife stuck in his belt. These, with a revolver, comprised his arms.

This strange specimen of the genus *Homo* came cantering down the mountain at a breakneck pace, stopping beside the travelers with a suddenness that nearly cost him a summersault.

CHAPTER II

OUTWARD BOUND.

"The bare, blue desert of the sea flowed out."—A. SMITH.

THE good ship *Marguerite*, Captain Stewart commanding, was bound for the Pacific, and finally for San Francisco. It was a soft spring morning, 185—, when she left New York harbor, and, with all sails set, caught the fresh breeze, and stood away gallantly on her course.

Leaning over the taffrail, and watching the blue waves as the ship plowed her way through them, were a couple of ladies and a gentleman, who had taken passage to San Francisco. They were all young, and from the close resemblance one of the ladies bore to the gentleman, it was easy to see they were brother and sister. Their names were Mabel and Charles Harris, and they were on their way to California to meet their father and Vernon Boyd, to whom Mabel was betrothed.

Charlie Harris was about twenty-one years of age, a slender, blue-eyed fellow, with a pleasant face, and a frank, boyish way that was eminently pleasing. His sister was three years his junior, and closely resembled him, having the same sunny blue eyes and pleasant face. Her closely-fitting sacque of gray cloth revealed the supple grace of her slender, willowy form, and the fresh salt breeze brought out the pale roses on her cheek to vivid carmine. She looked very pretty as she stood leaning over the ship's side, with the salt breeze blowing her veil back, and tossing her brown curls about her face, and perhaps the thought that she was soon to meet her young lover increased the happy look on her bright face, and gave an added sparkle to her violet eyes.

The third member of the little group was a slight, dark-haired, hazel-eyed girl, of seventeen years, quite as pretty in her sparkling brunette style as was the fairer Mabel. She was an orphan cousin of the brother and sister, and fondly cherished by them and her uncle Harris, whose fair-haired wife

had slept for many years beneath the green turf of the churchyard. Kitty Macy was as dear to the good old man as a daughter, which position it seemed likely she would one day fill, though as yet there was no definite engagement between herself and Charlie.

"A beautiful day for the beginning of our voyage, is it not?" said Mabel, at last, breaking the silence. "The sea is as calm as one could wish. How beautiful it appears in the bright sunlight! Oh, I could never weary of the ocean!"

"You will talk quite differently when we have been out a few weeks," remarked Charlie, turning to watch a sea-gull that was skimming over the waves. "The ocean is truly beautiful looked at for the first time, but when viewed, day after day, from the deck of a ship, it soon becomes tiresome."

"Faith, an' yer right enough there, Mister Charles. It's meself that kin niver see the beauties ov the ocean. A great grane waste it is, wilout aither an edge or a bottom, an' full ov bastely whales an' sharks that make no more ov a man thin I do of a peraty, bad 'cess to 'em. An' whin I think ov the murtherin' savages that live on the islands ov the Pacific, I confiss that I wish we war safe in Californy. Who knows what the unchristian craythurs may do? Sare, an' I've heard ov 'em taking a ship an' murthering the crew, an' it's not likely that the uncivilized bastes would have any respect for us ginty that are passengers."

Charlie turned at the sound of the voice, and listened to the Irishman's speech with a smile. The man, who was about twenty-eight years of age, had approached and was leaning over the rail. He was one of the two servants, the other of whom, a thick-set woman of about forty years, occupied a seat near, whom they were taking with them to their new home in the Far West.

"Are you afraid of the islanders, Dennis?" asked Kitty.

"Sare a bit," replied Dennis; "dil yees ever see any one that Dennis McKee was afeerd ov? Bat it's not meself that would like to be munthered by a divil ov a savage, savin' yer presence."

"Never fear, Dennis," said Charlie, "we shall not come to harm among them. Captain Stewart, I believe, only intends to touch at a few of the islands."

"Do yon mean that we are to stop at the cannibals' islands?" asked the servant woman.

"No, Nancy, only at those that are in some degree friendly."

"I'm glad on't," she remarked. "I don't want to trust myself among 'em. 'Twouldn't surprise me any ef we got shipwrecked. I don't like the sea, and it's only the love of you, that I've lived with always, that would tempt me onto it. Dear knows what you want to go to Californy for. There's nobody there but Indians."

Nancy was a kind soul, but rather given to fretting.

"Nobody else," said Dennis, with a sly twinkle; "an' I'd be niver surprised, Nancy, if we woke up some fine mornin' to find ourselves in the hands ov the craythurs. Och, but it's Dennis McKee that would show 'em his head wasn't empty!"

Dennis was a ruddy-faced fellow, with twinkling blue eyes, and a marvelous aptitude for boasting. His good nature was unlimited, and any adventure or incident that befell him was made the most of afterward.

John Harris had gone to California a year previous to the opening date of this story, accompanied by Vernon Boyd, and taking with them a mulatto named Cudjo, the third, and by no means the least important, of the three servants. Cudjo's imagination was boundless, and the principal object of his life was to keep ahead of his fellow-servant Dennis in the way of stories. The rivalry was keen between them, and the result was that there were wonderful tales related as the *bona fide* experience of both.

They were fairly out on their voyage now, fairly out on the green bosom of the Atlantic, and nobly did the *Marguerite* ride the waves, skimming along as fleetly as the sea-gulls whose white wings glanced over the water to landward.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURNING SHIP.

"The winds and the waves of ocean,
They rested quietly,
But I heard on the gale a sound of wail,
And tears came to mine eye "

The *Marguerite* had rounded Cape Horn, and was sailing placidly over the blue waves of the Pacific, borne steadily along by the almost invisible Trade winds. They were now sailing in about twenty degrees south latitude, one hundred and ten degrees west longitude; and headed nearly due west; the Georgian Islands being the first land Captain Stewart intended to make.

The weather was calm and pleasant, and the wide waste of waters looked peaceful enough under the last rays of the sun.

Mabel Harris sat on a rough bench on deck, listlessly watching the porpoises which wallowed in the blue waves, under the ship's side, and thinking how long it would be before she should see her father and Vernon Boyd. The voyage had been terribly monotonous, and she longed for its completion. The sun was hanging just above the water, a long bridge of red gold stretching across the sea toward him, and a huge bird sailed slowly away to southward. Every day it had been the same—the boundless ocean—the sun—the porpoises and sea birds, until Mabel had grown to hate them. How joyful would be the day that saw their arrival at San Francisco, and witnessed the meeting of themselves and friends. Joyful, indeed, but to Mabel it had never seemed so far distant. A vague sense of pending evil seemed to weigh on her spirits this evening, a feeling that some fearful peril was approaching. She strove to throw it off, thinking herself foolish and visionary, but it returned with seven-fold force.

Captain Stewart approached, startling her from her gloomy thoughts with a light remark.

"Dreaming, Miss Harris?" he exclaimed, dropping into a seat near her and removing his hat. "Your brother and Miss Macy, there, are engaged in something more pleasant."

He nodded significantly toward the other end of the deck, where Charlie and Kitty were promenading, and apparently engaged in earnest conversation.

"I see," replied Mabel, with a faint smile. "Do you believe in presentiments, Captain Stewart?" she added.

"Well, not exactly, Miss Harris. There may be something of the kind, but I never experienced any thing of it. Why do you ask?"

"I feel strangely this evening," she replied. "If I believed in coming events casting their shadows before, I should think there was some great calamity hanging over us."

"Nothing more fearful than a storm mercedes, I think," said the captain, "and I have no fears but the *Marguerite* will brave it."

Mabel looked up in surprise. "A storm, Captain Stewart?" she exclaimed. "Why, the sky is perfectly clear."

"Nevertheless, there are to my practiced eye, signs of a storm. Do you see that bird, Miss Harris? It is a stormy petrel. There is a tempest near, but it will not visit us before to-morrow, I think."

"Och, an' be jabbers," ejaculated Dennis, who stood near, "an' a storm w'd be a blissed relate. It's meself that is mighty tired ov this slow livin'. Ivery day is jist the same, an' begorra, I've watched thim porpoises floundering under the bows, till, by the bones of Fingal, I've nearly turned ter a sea-hog meself. Oh, but it's meself that will be glad when we raich Californy."

Night settled darkly over the sea. Mabel lay tossing from side to side on her couch till a late hour, wooing the drowsy god in vain. She could hear the waves breaking against the vessel's side with a steady monotonous sound, and from above the tramp of the sailors, and an occasional shout, came to her ears like an indistinct murmur. But at last even these faded away, and became inaudible in the land of sleep.

She was awakened suddenly, by hearing a loud, horrified shout, and starting up, became conscious of a fearful confusion above. Hurried tramping, frightened voices, and the

rattling of boxes, mingling with a steady roar that was not the waves, reached her, and, trembling with indefinable apprehension, she sprung up and began robing. In her haste and trepidation she did not perceive Kitty, until, in a calm voice, she said, slowly:

"Mabel, the ship is on fire."

Mabel turned with a suppressed scream, her face perfectly colorless, her eyes wide with horror.

"Great heavens!" she exclaimed, grasping a chair for support, "can they save her?"

"I have not been above," replied Kitty, "and I do not know. Don't look so frightened, Mabel; be calm."

"Oh, Kitty, if the ship burns, what will become of us?" she cried.

"We must trust in Heaven," was the calm reply. "I am not afraid."

Her perfect calmness restored Mabel to something like her usual self, and though her face was still pale she spoke quietly.

"Let us go on deck; I wish to see how far the flames have progressed. Perhaps the fire can be extinguished."

They reached the deck, but started back in horror at the sight that met their eyes. The forward part of the ship was a mass of flames.

The wind was freshening, and the flames, ever and anon caught by a passing gust, arose high in the air, lapping forward their hungry tongues as if eager for prey. Outlined against the dark night-sky, the lurid tongues leaping and darting, presented an awful spectacle. Shining afar out on the foam-crested waves, lighting up with a lurid glare the white faces of the sailors, and throwing ghostly, flickering shadows among the shrouds, it was a scene calculated to inspire the boldest hearts with terror. With the dark sky above them, the heaving, lurid waters, forever changing, around them, it seemed more like some fearful dream than a living reality.

But the hungry flames crept on; their warm breath was in their faces as they stood watching, their pitiless fangs crept nearer every moment. The men, inspired by fear and the captain's example, were working manfully to extinguish

the fire, but Kitty knew, as she looked at it, that no human power could save the *Marguerite*. She was doomed.

"Mabel," she said, turning to her cousin, whose fascinated eyes were fastened on the flames, "the ship is lost. Let us go below and prepare to leave her. We shall soon have to take to the boats."

She turned to seek the cabin, and encountered the captain and Charlie.

"You here, ladies!" exclaimed the captain; "you had better go below. We can not save the ship and must take to the boats. Get ready as soon as possible."

He turned with a shout to the men, and the girls ran down to the cabin, leaving Charlie on deck. Nancy was there, busily doing up a small bundle, her tongue flying as fast as her hands, notwithstanding the fact that herself was the only inmate of the room.

"This is what comes o' goin' sailin' off to Californy," she grumbled; "'tain't no ways likely we'll ever see there, now. There, Miss Mabel, put on your bonnet; you don't want to go bareheaded like an Ojibway Injin."

It was but a moment before the girls, followed by Nancy carrying her bundle, were on deck again. Short as had been their absence, the flames had made frightful progress. The ship was almost a complete mass of fire, and the heat was intense. The boats, three in number, had been lowered, and Captain Stewart was busily superintending the work of furnishing them with water and provisions. Half the crew still were working at the fire to keep it in check while preparations were made for departure, but the intense heat was fast driving them before it. Already the mainmast had fallen, and the ship's timbers, dry and oily, burned like tinder.

The girls, standing by the hatchway, could hardly breathe for the fierce heat. Mabel, faint and trembling, leaned against Kitty, who, calm and pale, stood as quietly and firmly as if no danger menaced.

"To the boats!" cried the captain, springing forward. "Haste, for your lives. Steady there!"

The crew pressed forward, and the two long-boats were speedily filled, with a mate in each. Captain Stewart drew the girls forward, and Charlie helped Mabel down into the

third boat where Dennis was already standing. As he turned, the hot flames blew into his very face.

"Quick!" cried the captain, but Kitty drew back and pushed Nancy forward.

"Take her first!" she cried, "I am not afraid."

Charlie sprung into the boat helping the terrified Nancy after him. The two other boats had cast off and were rowing away. No one remained on board save Kitty Macy and Captain Stewart. Charlie sprung for Kitty.

"Back!" shouted the captain, "I will bring her."

He turned, but, at that moment, the flames, that were now close upon them, caught by a fresh gust of wind, darted forward, and caught in Kitty's drapery. In an instant the light fabric was a mass of flames!

"Cast off!" cried the captain.

The boat, impelled by Dennis' oar, drifted clear of the ship's side. They were alone on the burning deck!

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE CHARACTER.

THE eccentric-looking stranger trundled down the mountain side, describing strange circles in the air with his arms and legs in the process, and came to a sudden halt beside Cuijo. That individual, fully impressed that he was neither flesh nor blood, stood with trembling limbs and starting eye balls, awaiting whatever Fate had in store.

"I reckon, now, that you're *in* here, ain't you?" began the stranger, before any one had time to speak. "Yes, well, it strikes me 't you *be*! And, as you've doubtless noticed, I'm here too! Curious coincidence, ain't it? Howsomever, there's a difference, if I know myself."

He dropped the butt of his gun to the ground, and leaning his arms upon it looked at them with a broad smile. Vernon's first impression was that the man was insane, but a glance into the good-humored though homely face, and clear blue eyes, put that thought to flight instantly.

"Are you, too, a prisoner in the valley?" asked Mr. Harris, as the stranger finished speaking.

"Precisely not, stranger," was the reply. "I'm here, as you see, but I can depart this vale of sand as soon's I please, which I—"

"You know the way out!" interrupted Mr. Harris. "Then in Heaven's name, lead the way! We are dying of thirst and exhaustion. Oh, my children, shall I see you once more?"

His voice trembled with emotion, and he leaned against the rocks for support. Vernon's face flashed as he thought of Mabel, his betrothed, but he said, quietly:

"Will you show the way out of the valley?"

"Happy to do so, Mr.—"

"Boyd," supplemented Vernon, as the stranger paused.

"Exactly. My name is Peltiah Jehoakim Brown." He looked inquiringly at Mr. Harris. Vernon quietly introduced his companions, and then said:

"If you will act as our guide you shall be suitably rewarded, and—"

"Dang the reward!" burst out Mr. Brown, energetically. "Who wants any? Not yours respectfully, anyway. Jest lift your traps, and we'll be hoofing it."

He shifted his rifle to his left shoulder, and started down the mountain. Mr. Harris and Vernon followed, and Cudjo, who had listened to every word Mr. Brown uttered, with open mouth, started after them with a grunt.

"Fo' de Lord, I spozed it war a ghos'," he muttered. "Pears like he's flesh an' blood, arter all. Golly, my legs don' take up good."

Brown reached the valley considerably in advance of the others, and stood for a moment awaiting them.

"For what purpose are you in the valley, Mr. Brown?" asked Vernon. "I should think any one acquainted with it would shun it as they would the plague."

"Jest stick a peg there," ejaculated the stranger. "It don't agree with my digestion to be called Mister Brown. Jest say Pelt, if its convenient. As for my bein' in the valley—I was here 'cause I didn't have any thing perticular to do, an' a feller might as well have variety in scenery ye know, when they're travelin'. I was pokin' around, an', takin' a view

through this pocket-glass, I happened to see you. Immediately thereupon, you understand, it struck me with the force of a mule's hoof that you couldn't git out. Of course I started, an' here I be! It's 'bout as lucky a thing as ever happened for you that I see'd you, for yez might hunt from July till eternity an' not find the way out. What did you come here for?"

"We were traveling about to see the country, and thought we would explore the valley," replied Vernon.

"Exactly," said Brown. "It was curiosity that brought you here. Curiosity's a great thing. It gits folks into the most amazin' didikilities, an' havin' brought them there it don't desert 'em. I've noticed that! They always have a curiosity to find a way out o' the trouble, equal to that that led 'em into it."

"Golly, it's gittin' warm," said Cudj. "How long'll it take to git out o' dis yere hole?"

"Four or five hours," said Brown. "You hain't got no hosses, have ye?"

"No," replied Mr. Harris: "we are on foot."

"That's precisely the deezeeze I'm afflicted with," remarked the guide, taking a huge chew of tobacco. "Now, I can't apresheate hosses; they're very well in their way, I suppose, but that way ain't my way. I always hoof it wherever I go. On occasions, in my travelin's, there's a dunkerookus gits after me, but I can jest git up *and* dest, if it's needful, an' I hain't up to this present time been swallowed by any thing."

The eccentric hunter shifted his rifle to the other shoulder and increased his gait to such a ~~pace~~ that the exhausted travelers found some difficulty in keeping up with him. The sun was now well up in the heavens, and its cloudless beams were scorchingly hot. Wearily the tired party traveled on, and under Brown's guidance found themselves, late in the afternoon, once more out of the fearful valley of death.

"There's a spring hereabouts, somewhere," said the hunter, pausing near a group of trees, and looking about him. "An' it's most awfal good water, too. Where on earth—oh, here 'tis?"

He stepped briskly forward, and stopped at the foot of a large tree from under the roots of which a clear spring of

cold water gurgled. Clear and sparkling it bubbled over its gravelly bed, and it required considerable self-control to enable the thirsty party to drink it in moderation.

Having in some degree satisfied his thirst, Cudjo threw himself on the ground at a little distance from the spring, and with a tremendous yawn composed himself for a nap. He had scarcely done so when a sharp crackling of bushes aroused him, and the next instant a beautiful doe sprung into view. Seeing him she stopped, and gazing a moment threw up her head and bounded away. Cudjo scrambled to his feet, and seizing his musket, raised it, and taking a hasty aim, fired.

The result was unexpected and extraordinary. The gun recoiled, and, to his unbounded astonishment and indignation, the gunner found himself lying on his back in a neighboring thicket, feeling considerably the worse for his performance. Scrambling to his feet with a howl, the darky stood for a moment looking about in a bewildered way, and then, fully comprehending the situation, drew himself up with a look of indignation sublime to behold.

"By de Herculibus!" he ejaculated, rubbing his shoulder disconsolately. "Whoever'd 'a' thought dat infunnel weepen 'ud 'a' conducted itself in sich a way? Dat ar' musket is in gineral a well behaved member o' society an' ain't given to kickin'. It's my 'pinion dat ar's been tampered wid. Who's a-been a-meddlin' wid dat fire-arm? Who's been a-doin' it, I say?"

"Ha! ha! ho! ho!" ejaculated Peltiah Brown, doubling up in an agony of sideache. "Oh, I shall go off!"

"Humph," grunted the offended Cudjo. "I'd like to know what *you's* a-laffin' at, Mister Pelt. Go off, indeed! I sh'u'd think dey had been 'bout 'nough goin' off done, now. Once eb my teeth is jist a-hangin' in, an' dat ar' shoulder is knocked into a jelly; an' you a-laffin'! Shows your brought-up!"

And, with that indignant outburst, Cudjo started limpingly along to see the result of his shot. To his joy he found that he had killed the deer. This was the first game they had met, and the half-starved hunters lost no time in skinning and getting it ready to cook.

"Cl'ar de way," exclaimed Cudjo, bustling about to kindle

a fire, and forgetting his bruised shoulder in his excitement. "Dis chile 'ull cook dat ar' meat hisself indiwiduly. I kin beat anybody on the br'ilin' ob meat. Gimme a slice dar, Mister Brown!"

Peltiah was busily cutting off pieces of meat, and his preparations for the meal were such that Cudjo stared in astonishment.

"Fo' de Lor'!" he ejaculated, "Mister Brown, I'd like to know if you t'ink we's pigs? Dar you've got meat 'nough for ten men."

"Keep cool," admonished the hunter. "There's four of us, you observe, an' we're all hungry. I'm jest as near starved as I can be and hang together. Here, put this chunk to cook."

Cudjo personally superintended the cooking, and in a short time a large quantity was broiled.

"Come on, gen'lemen!" said the cook, flourishing the "spit" triumphantly, "here's de fust-rate article ob American venison a-waitin' to be eated. It's cooked in a way dat conflects a gra' deal ob honor on me, as the prime mover of the affair, too, I'll jes' tell you!"

The half-famished men were noways backward in coming to the banquet, and were speedily grouped about the fire discussing the savory venison with keen relish.

"Now this here is what I call good livin'," remarked the guide, taking up a pound-and-a-half slice of meat and making away with it with marvelous rapidity. "If there's any thing I hate it's goin' hungry. I don't b'lieve I could live more than two or three weeks without victuals. I tried it once, when circumstances wasn't overly good for gettin' food, an' I'm blest if it seemed to agree with me! It's mostly queer the way folks eat. Once you get in the habit an' you can't stop it. 'Tain't like— Holy Moses! What's up?"

The hunter stopped suddenly, and dropping the meat he held, gazed at Cudjo in open-mouthed astonishment. That unfortunate mortal had sprung to his feet with a howl of agony, and with both hands pressed on his stomach, and a look of anguish depicted on his face, was dancing, half bent, about the place, first on one foot and then the other, and executing the most marvelous feats in stepping "on the light

fantastic toe." In his haste to satisfy his hunger he had swallowed a piece of hot meat, but, as is ever the case, retribution was speedy. With tears in his eyes the unhappy darky hopped about, unheeding the mirth of his companions, whose sense of the ludicrous was not proof against the picture he presented, until, suddenly, a bright thought struck him. Stopping his impromptu hornpipe with a howl, he darted forward to the spring, and, dropping to the ground, bent his head to drink. Haste and tears combined blinded his eyes, and he lowered his head so rapidly that his nose came in contact with the bed of the spring. He got a swallow of water, but, nearly strangled, he came suddenly to an upright position with another howl.

"Bloss de Lor'!" he ejaculated, sputtering and blowing like a porpoise. "I stuck my bill too far into de water. I—hew! Oh, golly, but dat ar' meat *was* hot!"

Having cleared his throat, the unlucky African came back and sat down to finish his supper.

"Have you been in California long?" asked Vernon, addressing their guide.

"Come here in '45," replied the hunter, "an' I calculate to remain here for an indefinite and undecided period of time. Plenty of good game here, an' up in the mountains somethin' better."

"Ho!" exclaimed Cudjo, "what's better'n good game? I'd just like— O-l-e Ber-ginny!"

He stopped in undisguised astonishment, and stared at the hunter with his mouth wide open. That eccentric individual held another pound-and-a-half slice of meat, which was disappearing at a rate that threatened to choke him. For a moment Cudjo gazed at him and the rapidly diminishing venison, and then, in a melancholy tone, inquired:

"Mr. Brown, ain't you afeard you'll oberload yer stomach mick?"

"Nary danger of it," replied Peltiah, briskly, swallowing the last mouthful and attacking another piece. "I always eat moderately, as you see. I've a proper respect for the rules of dojestion."

"Don't suthin' afe you, Mr. Brown?" continued Cudjo, mournfully, looking wistfully at the meat.

"B'lieve there d-does," stuttered the guide, with his mouth full. "I know I'm all-fired hungry!"

"Golly!" said Cudjo, "we won't hab 'nough left for breakfast'."

"Brown," interrupted Vernon, "what is it up in the mountains of more value than game?"

"Somethin' worth while. It's— Hello!"

He sprung to his feet and looked around for his rifle. To his dismay he found he had left it several rods distant, leaning against a tree. Startled by his look, Vernon also sprung up, and looking in the direction the hunter pointed, saw several hideously-painted Indians emerging from the thicket near at hand and advancing toward them. He had only time for a hurried glance, when the foremost Indian raised his gun, and aiming it directly at his head, pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER V.

THE ISLAND.

"The night grows wondrous dark; deep-swelling gusts
And sultry stillness take the rule by turn,
While o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
Roll slowly on. This surely bodes a storm."—BAILLIE.

As the light boat containing the Harris party drifted away from the side of the burning *Marquise*, leaving the captain and Kitty Macy on the deck, a wild cry went up from the other boats. Mabel Harris, petrified with horror at sight of Kitty in flames, uttered a faint cry, and sunk down fainting.

Unheeding every thing, Captain Stewart caught up a large thick mantle dropped by Nancy, and hastily throwing it around Kitty, clasped her in his arms and sprung into the sea.

In an instant he reappeared at the surface, holding the frightened girl in the arms, and was helped into the boat. The only portion of Kitty's clothing which had taken fire was a thin gauze mantle, and she was consequently uninjured.

"Row away!" shouted the captain, himself seizing an oar. "The ship will sink in a moment and we shall be drawn down with her if we remain here."

A few moments sufficed to carry them beyond danger, and they had scarcely attained a safe distance when, with a lurch, the *Marguerite* went down.

"Thank God we are safe!" said Captain Stewart. "It was a narrow escape. Are you injured, Miss Macy?"

"Not at all," replied Kitty, wringing the water from her dress-skirt. "My hair is singed a little, but that is nothing. Thanks to your promptness, Captain Stewart, I am not harmed."

"How horrible!" murmured Mabel, who under Nancy's skillful hands had recovered her consciousness. "Oh, Kitty, I thought you were gone!"

Now that the waters were no longer illuminated by the light from the burning ship, a heavy darkness, which was momentarily growing deeper, settled over them. The wind was increasing, and dark clouds went scudding swiftly through the hollow depths of the dusky night-sky.

"I am apprehensive of a storm," said Charlie, anxiously viewing the growing indications of a tempest. "If there should be one, unless we can sight a ship before that, we are lost."

"Not much hopes of running on to a ship before *that* storm will be upon us," muttered the captain. "We might sail here weeks and months, if it were possible to exist that long, and not happen to see a single ship. Our position is a desperate one."

"Captain Stewart," said Kitty, "do you think the storm is likely to be a severe one?"

"Can't say," replied the old tar, dubiously; "looks as if it might be, and a long one, too."

"Begorra, Miss Kitty," cried Dennis, who was never daunted, let the situation be what it might, "here's an' agreeable little incident to break the dullness. Ye've jumped overboard, an' it's evident that ye've got plenty ov adventure ahead. It's a mighty fine little sail we're likely to have, an' I'd be sorra a bit surprised if we went to the bottom ov the sea. Faith, an' the Pacific Ocean 'ud be a grand monument,

but a fellow would have to go widout an ipitaff. By the bones of Fingal! but it's a fine braze this same is getting to be!"

The wind rapidly increased, and the darkness became impenetrable. The three boats endeavored to keep together, but this, in the darkness and storm, was a well-nigh hopeless task. The violence of the waves was such that it seemed every moment that the boats would be engulfed.

Through the remainder of the night the storm continued without increasing in severity. Had it done so, no power could have saved the shipwrecked wanderers in that frail boat. As it was, it seemed impossible that it could escape being dashed to pieces. But on, and on, they drifted, through the darkness and storm, without knowing whither they were going, or in what direction.

By and by the faint, gray dawn began stealing over the waters. With its first light, Charles Harris stood up and gazed around in search of the other boats. Neither of them was visible. During the night they had separated, and now, far as the eye could reach, appeared only the boiling, surging waters, bounded by the low, gray sky. The wind was beginning to blow more violently, and the waves momentarily increased in size. To the east rose a heavy dark cloud, torn by forked tongues of flame, and the low, deep-booming thunder added its voice to that of the deep.

"It's all over with us when that squall strikes us," said Captain Stewart, looking at the angry clouds. "This boat will not bear any added strain. We've drifted about all night, only to go to the bottom in the morning, it seems."

"Captain Stewart," exclaimed Kitty, in a hurried, tone, "I think we may yet be saved. If my eyes do not not deceive me, there is land!"

She stood up, steadying herself by placing one hand on Nancy's shoulder, and looked with eager eyes across the surging waters. Every eye followed the direction of hers, and a glad cry broke simultaneously from the lips of all.

"It is land!" exclaimed Charlie, excitedly, "and not far distant either. I think we may reach it before the force of the wind strikes us."

"Doubtful," said Captain Stewart, with a glance at the

rapidly nearing cloud; "but, it's our only chance, so pull with a will."

Kitty sunk down beside Mabel, and the two girls sat with clasped hands gazing toward the goal of safety they were nearing. It was a long, low island, its rich tropical vegetation looking meager and desolate viewed in the dim gray dawn and furious storm. Above, the livid blue lightning shot its fiery tongues, while the deep thunder rolled unceasingly.

Through the seething, foam-crested waves, the little boat shot forward, propelled by the strong arms of the men, and the force of the driving wind, which every instant appeared to increase in fury. For a time it seemed doubtful if they would reach the harbor in safety, but at last the boat shot into a little cove formed by rocks, and was hurriedly secured.

It was not a moment too soon. The last member of the party had barely left the boat, when, with a fearful rush, the mighty wind surged over the face of the deep, sending the waves far up on the beach, and bowing like reeds the slender stems of the graceful palms that covered the island. The women cowered before it in terror, crouching close beside the rocks to escape its fury.

"This way," shouted Charlie, his voice barely distinguishable above the roar of the tempest; "behind these rocks we shall be comparatively sheltered."

It was a tiny, niche-like grotto, barely large enough to enable them all to enter, but, when inside, they were sheltered from the fury of the storm in a great degree.

"Begorra," said Dennis, creeping close to the wall, "this same is a part of the intertainmint not mintioned in the bill. When I agrade to go to Californy an' be gardener, I didn't promise ter be shipwrecked an' cast away on a desert island; an' by the same towken, how do we know it is a desert island? It's about as like to be kivered with bla'guards ov savages as iny thing else."

Charlie started.

"Dennis may be right," he said, hurriedly. "This is evidently one of the Paumotu Islands, and is quite likely to be inhabited. If so, it may be by cannibals."

Mabel uttered a cry of horror. "Cannibals! Oh, heaven, what shall we do!"

"Wait until we see if it is inhabited," said Kitty. "I shall not meet trouble half-way."

"I wish I had your strength of mind, Kitty," said Mabel, faintly. "It is impossible for me to be courageous. I feel sick at heart."

"By the bones ov Fingal!" ejaculated the Irishman, "it's meself that 'll kick up some musses wid thim before I'll be skinned an' 'aten. They 'll find me a tough morsel to digest, the h'athen."

"It may be an uninhabited island," said Captain Stewart, "though, from its size, and the fact that there is another one near, I should think it might have inhabitants."

"There is no sign of human habitation," remarked Charlie, "but as the island apparently is several miles long, there might be a whole village beyond those hills. We must trust to Providence."

"It's about starved I am, onyway," said Dennis, "an' we've niver a thing to ate, larrin' them sea-biscuits that are soaked wid wather till they're like paste. Purty vittals it is for dacent folks to ate, an' I coul' aisily ate the whole quarter ov an iliphant meself, I'm that hungry. Unless I can have somethin' in jist a holy minit, I shill be reduced to a skileton, be jabers."

"We shall have to eat the biscuit and be satisfied," said Charlie. "We shall doubtless be glad to get as good as these even, before we reach civilization, if that happy day ever dawns. No doubt there is fruit on the island, but of course we can't search for it in this storm."

"Talk about civilization," grumbled Nancy, who sat clasping her bundle on her knees, "we never 'll see it, depend on't. This all comes of gaddin' off somewhere, when you're well off where you be. There don't no sensible folks do nothin' of the kind."

After delivering this double-shotted negative, Nancy subsided, and munched her biscuit in melancholy silence.

Throughout the day the storm continued, and the party remained in the grotto. During the following night the wind and waves subsided, and morning dawned brightly on a comparatively calm sea.

With the first light of day, the irrepressible Dennis was

up, and out on an exploring expedition, leaving his tired companions still asleep.

Wandering around he soon found some orange trees loaded with fruit, and lost no time in satisfying his appetite and filling his hat to take to the grotto. Having done this he paused to look about him. Behind him arose a low hill, crowned with feathery palms and graceful orange trees, intermingled with clinging vines covered with bright flowers. Below, the ground slanted gradually to the white, sandy beach, where a number of turtle were disporting themselves in the sunshine. These latter drew the Irishman's attention at once.

"Faith an' I'll have wan ov thim, be jibbers," he ejaculated. "It's illegant 'ating they are, an' thim musky sea-biscuits are enough to pizon a mon, intirely. It sets me tathe on edge to jist think ov thim. Now wan of thim beauties down there w'u'd make an illegant soup, only we've niver a kittle to cook it in. But onyhow we can ate it."

The Irishman cautiously approached the beach, and placing his hat on the ground provided himself with a stout club and advanced boldly to the attack.

The turtles, alarmed at his approach, scrambled hastily away toward the water. All gained it but one, which the Hibernian succeeded in heading off, and, rushing up to it, struck a vigorous blow on its shelly back with his club. The only heed the turtle gave to this demonstration was to quicken its speed, at which Dennis concluded to change the mode of attack, when he skillfully turned the creature over on its back. Having secured his game, he took a strong string from his pocket, tied it about the neck of the tortoise, and, taking this in one hand and his hat in the other, started toward the grotto. He had taken but a few steps forward when he caught a glimpse of a passing figure, and, looking up, discovered a swarthy savage standing a few yards distant!

"Howly Moses! There's something with legs on!" he ejaculated, in astonishment. "Arrah, there, ye smutty-faced thafe of the worruld; jest ye come here, an', be the powers, I'll make a dint in yer frontispace wid me bit ov a stick!"

The islander, instead of accepting this valiant challenge, took to his heels, and in an instant had vanished in the woods.

"So the bastely little bog ~~is~~ inhabited," schiloquized the Irishman, as he started on a run toward the grotto, dragging the turtle behind him, "an' I'll warrant the haythens will be down on us, like a hodfull of bricks, before we can wink. Faith an' meself will fly to warn thim of the parils before us."

He cantered down the slope toward the grotto, halting before the awakening inmates with a grand flourish that scattered his oranges in every direction.

"Git up here, every sowl ov ye, an' prepare to be skinned, hung, quartered and 'aten! Begorra, an' we've fell among thaves. This bastely island is jist crawlin' wid savages, an' in fifteen minits from now we'll be prisoners."

The different members of the party stared in different degrees of bewillement at the beginning of Dennis' address; at its close all understood the importance of the news he conveyed. Charles Harris rose up, pale and resolute.

"What have you seen?" he demanded.

"Savages, thick as the sands ov the say-shore," responded Dennis. "Be jabbers an' isn't it meself that give some ov thim sore heads? But it was, that same."

"Dennis," said Mabel, suspiciously, "I'm afraid you are not telling the truth."

"Arrah now an' I am," said Dennis. "It's jist possible that I stretched it a waa bit, but, by the Howly Vargin, I saan a big savage down there, not a rod from me. He run away in a twinklin', an' I come straight here. That's the blissed thruth."

"If this is true, had we not better take to the boat and leave at once?" asked Charlie, impressed by the earnestness of the Irishman's manner.

"Perhaps they are friendly," suggested Kitty.

"Not likely," said Captain Stewart; "the islanders to the eastward of the Paumotos haven't a very enviable reputation. I think we had better leave at once. Our provisions, such as they are, will last a number of days. Meantime we may sight a ship."

Instant preparation was made for departure. The water and biscuits were placed in the boat, and Charlie was in the act of gathering the scattered oranges, when an exclamation from Kitty arrested him.

Looking up he discovered that the brow of the nearest hill was covered with dusky forms. The remainder of the party made the same discovery at once.

"We are seen," said Charlie, "and must await whatever fate has in store for us. They *may* be friendly."

Even as he spoke, with hostile demonstrations, the islanders surrounded them. Resistance against such odds were worse than useless. They were prisoners.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAPPED.

Hark!

Among the vales and mountains of the earth
There is a deep, portentous murmuring,
Like the swift rush of subterranean streams."

FORTUNATELY for Vernon Boyd, when the Indian pulled the trigger, the gun missed fire. Otherwise he could not have escaped.

Before the savage could successfully renew the attack, Brown had recovered his rifle, and a wild hand-to-hand conflict ensued. The Indians numbered only seven, and in a short time, victory to the white men was assured, the fight resulting in the death of two savages, and the remainder took to their heels and vanished in an instant.

"Pretty well done," said Vernon, quietly surveying the field; "we are the victors."

"Precisely thus," remarked Brown, "but these ain't all the red-skins there is 'bout here, no, not by a jugful! This bein' a well 'stablished fact, what folloes? Why, that we must hoof it to more congenial climes."

"Perhaps we had better start at once," said Mr. Harris.

"In course! I'll shoulder this meat, 'cause we may not want to use our shootin'-irons, an' it won't do to let the inner man go 'thout refreshment. Fall in! Forward all!"

"Which way had we better go?" asked Vernon.

"North-west, in my humble opinion," replied Peltiah. "After goin' fur enough we'll find a pleasanter country than this. I've got a cave up in the mountains, what is a cave, I can tell you! I've exercised the right of squatter sovereignty an' pre-empted it for my individ'al benefit. Found it in a queer way too. Should object to makin' explorations under them exact circumstances every day, you understand."

"How was it?" queried Vernon Boyd.

"Wal, you see it's sorter in the side of a butte, rocky too, an' the whole face of it is covered with stunted cedars. You wouldn't have an idee that thar was a cave there more'n nothin'. Wal, one day I was loafing around there, lookin' out for signs of game, an' had gone purty close to the butte an' was standin' there in a sort of bend in it, lookin' up at it, when I heerd the allfiredest growl, right close to me. Thinks I, there's a dunkerookus sure, an' I looked 'round to see it. Thereupon, you understand, I *seen* it. There, setting a few feet off, with a fascinatin' smile expandin' its countenance, was one of the biggest grizzlys that ever tramped.

"As I said afore, there was a holler in the rock right where I stood, an' the grizzly stood 'twixt me an' the open ground, so I couldn't git out. Like a derved fool I'd left my revolvers in my saddle—ye see I'd hitched my hoss a little ways off; so I had nothing but my gun, an' it was a single-barreled one at that. Now, after these little particulars have been related, may be it strikes you that I was in a tight place.

"If I killed him first shot it would be lucky, 'cause it's dubersome killin' a grizzly ba'r at one shot. Howsomever, I took good aim an' let fly. The ba'r went down like a log, an' I begun to load my gun fast as I coul. I'd got the bullet jest started down when I heerd another awful growl, and I'll be skinned if there wa'n't *another* grizzly right there! 'Bout that time I begun to feel streaked. You understand?

"The second one started fur me, an', as I hadn't got my gun loaded I nateraly backed up so as to gain time. For the life o' me I couldn't git the bullet down; it stuck till I 'rived at the conclusion that it never was goin' another inch. Meantime ye see, that thar grizzly was makin' fur me an' I kep' backin' up. There was a clump of them cedars jest behind me an' one purty good-sized tree. I caught at

the limb of that tree and drawed myself up quite a piece, when suddenly the blasted thing broke an' I made a voyage downwards. I struck on my back in 'mongst them cedar bushes, an' jest then I begun to slide, an' slide, an' *kep'* slidin', an' every thing was dark as pitch all 'round.

"I begun to think I was on my way to kingdom come when, jest then, I come up with a bump 'ginst somethin'. gathered myself up pretty quick, an' looked 'round. 'Bout fifteen or twenty feet off I could see a little spot of light, but where I was 'twas dark. I felt 'round an' soon found I was in a cave. Not knowin' where I might go if I didn't keep docile, I lay still till I thought the b'ars had gone, then I crawled up the place I'd slid down an' went out. I wanted to explore it, you understand, so I got some touch-wood and went down again.

"Wal, at the foot of that passage-way I found two doors like, and beyond them a mess of caverns. An' what's more they're full of gold."

"Gold!" exclaimed Mr. Harris and Boyd.

"Yes, sir, gold, 'most pure too! Now, ye see, if there wa'n't sich a big pile of it I might not tell ye, but, there's any amount on't, so I can jest as well be generous as not. You understand?"

"Thank you," said Vernon. "If you will guide us to this fairy cavern, I think we will avail ourselves of the privilege of getting some of the treasure. How far distant is it?"

"'Bout three days' travel for them as uses shank's horses," replied the guide. "Now, for anybody that calculates to *settle*, some money's jest the thing. But, I don't care 'bout gittin' much of the almighty dollar, bein' as I like the woods too well to leave 'em."

That night the party encamped at the foot of the wooded hill, and, as no signs of Indians had been seen, and the situation being a secluded one, a fire was started.

While Cadjoe was attending to the important duty of cooking the meat for supper, Vernon Boyd sat a little apart from the others, silent and thoughtful. Brown's information concerning the gold in the cave had interested him much. The time drew near when the *Marguerite* was due, and Mabel would soon be his. His fortune was by no means ample, and if, by

mining, he could increase it, the home he would take her to as his wife could be made more pleasant and luxurious.

Absorbed in his own pleasant thoughts of the fair young girl, he did not notice Mr. Harris approaching until he stood beside him.

"Vernon," he said, seating himself beside the young man, "you doubtless remember hearing me speak of Richard Maxwell?"

"I do," replied Vernon Boyd. "He was your enemy."

"Yes," returned Mr. Harris, "he was. You probably never knew why. I will tell you the story. Though he is dead, doubtless, to-night he haunts my thoughts. You know that, six years ago, he shipped on a whaler, and that the ship was wrecked with the loss of all hands save one, who escaped as if by miracle. There is no doubt but that Richard Maxwell perished at that time, but to-night he is constantly in my thoughts, together with the feeling of dread he always inspired. **He was a very bad man.**

"We were very distantly related, and my great-uncle, Maxwell Harris, having no heirs, and a large fortune to dispose of, educated both Richard and myself; and though the subject was never directly mentioned, it was generally understood that we were to be joint heirs to his property. Richard Maxwell was fifteen years younger than I, and I had finished my education, and was in business before he came to reside with my uncle.

"He was always an ill-favored man, and we were never the best of friends. When my uncle died, it was found that to me he had bequeathed his entire estate, cutting Richard Maxwell off with a pittance of one thousand dollars. This to me was as great a surprise as it could have been to Richard, but he immediately charged me with being the cause of our uncle's unexpected change of intention, whereby he was left a beggar; and, despite my protestations of innocence, left me in a rage, and with loud declarations of hatred and enmity.

"Henceforward he led a dissipated life, and ended by being arrested in the act of robbing a house. I was one of the chief witnesses against him, and the result was he was sentenced to five years in the Penitentiary. His last words to

me, after the trial, were full of hatred, and threats of vengeance at some future day. The look and manner that accompanied them, left no room for doubt as to their earnestness. After his term of imprisonment was over, he engaged as coachman to my nearest neighbor, where he maintained strict surveillance over my every action, much to my annoyance. I was much surprised to see one who had been reared as he had been, descending to such a position merely to gratify his own revengeful passions.

"I was fearful lest in his hatred he should harm my children, and, during the year he held the situation, I lived in a state of continual anxiety. But, at last, greatly to my relief, he left, and a short time afterward I heard that he had shipped on the whale ship *Sea-wave*, for a three years' voyage.

"I will not deny that the news of his death was a great relief to me, for I felt that while he lived, myself and family were not safe from evil."

"Hi, dar, supper's ready!" called out Cadjo, at this moment, and the party were soon seated discussing the broiled venison, that alone and guiltless of salt, constituted the "supper."

An hour later, silence and darkness brooded over the encampment.

The next morning, at an early hour, the adventurers were on the move. Peltiah Brown, after taking a protracted survey of the cloudless sky, shook his head thoughtfully.

"Don't like the looks on't," he muttered. "No, I jest don't!"

"Why not?" asked Mr. Harris.

"'Cause why, it looks as if we might have an earthquake this year," was the reply. "It's too lurid to suit my fancy."

The sky was intensely clear, with a faint, lurid glow most disagreeable to the eye, while a solemn, unnatural stillness seemed to pervade all nature.

Vernon Boyd, wandering aimlessly among the hills, discovered a beautiful grotto, from which a small opening led to what appeared to be a chain of caverns. Making his discovery known to the others, the whole party entered on an exploring tour. The first grotto was well lighted, and next to this was a large, dark, singular room, filled with huge stones, and pendent stalactites of a dark color. The third room was

high and irregular, but looked in the light of the torches like a scene from fairy-land. Long stalactites, of a glittering glass-like appearance, were pendent from the ceiling, and curious pyramidal stalagmites stood out upon the floor. The walls, rough and irregular, glittered in the torchlight like crystal.

"How beautiful!" was the simultaneous exclamation from the lips of all.

At that instant there was a low rumble like distant thunder, followed by an upheaval of the earth beneath their feet.

"The earthquake!" shouted Brown, "get out of here instant!"

All started for the open air. Too late! There was a second upheaval, a loud report that echoed fearfully through the caverns, and then total darkness.

A rock had fallen, and shut the entrance of the cave!

CHAPTER VII.

DARK DAYS.

"Surely we have met before!"

THE shipwrecked party, surrounded by the islanders, were marched off amid savage demonstrations of delight. The islanders were a most unprepossessing appearing people. Dark, swarthy, brutish-looking faces, framed in a shock of coarse hair well plastered with cocoanut-oil, greasy, half-naked bodies horribly marked with tattooing, together with their coarse, savage demeanor, formed a picture ill calculated to inspire confidence in the beholder.

The path pursued led across the hill on which the savages first made their appearance, thence across a little valley, thence up another hill.

"Be jabbers," ejaculated Dennis, as he toiled up the second hill, flanked on either side by a stalwart islander, "be the time I've got my carcase to the top of this murderin' hill I'll be nothing but skin and bones, intirely. Pretty work this, whin a mon hain't had a bit o' breakfast. It's the bleached skileton

of Dennis McKee that ye'll see layin' about here shortly. I've run all the flesh off me intirely."

"Ugh, much fat—be much good—good meat," grunted one of the islanders.

"Where did they learn English?" whispered Mabel to Charlie. "Perhaps they may be partially civilized, though they look little like it."

"Mabel," said Kitty, "did you notice that he said '*much fat—good meat*'?"

A deadly faintness crept over Mabel. Those words—what could they mean, save one thing?

"Beorra, here's the city of rest, p'ace, and repose," said Dennis, "to our bones," he added, *sotto voce*.

They had gained the top of the hill, and below them, in a pleasant valley, lay a village. A few moments later they entered it, and proceeded up the main street, followed by a crowd of curious women and children.

The houses were built with low, latticed side-walls, and thatched roofs, looking very pretty and picturesque, as they were grouped irregularly among the cocoa and bread-fruit trees.

The prisoners were conducted down the street, and halted before a building, which from its size and general appearance was evidently the royal palace. It was very high, with long verandas stretching its whole length, their thatched roofs supported by slender columns ornamented with cocoa-nut plait in the form of beautiful moldings. Large mats carpeted the verandas and outer room, and gave a delicious appearance of coolness to the whole.

In the outer room the islanders halted for a moment while one of their number passed inside. In an instant he reappeared, and the prisoners were conducted into the "throne room," and presented before his majesty, Baloa, king of the island.

This was a large, high room, and contained no furniture of any description save a sort of throne at the further end of the room, fashioned of palm stems and reeds, and which was, in fact, little more than a huge chair.

In this throne-chair sat the king, Baloa, his hair plastered thickly with cocoa-nut oil, his person draped in a large scarlet shawl, thrown over the left shoulder, and confined with a

glittering brass pin under the right arm. The portions of the body which were exposed were marked with red in various forms of tattooing, the most noticeable one being a large anchor on his breast. Heavy rings loaded his fingers, and drooped from his ears, and his oily face glistened with savage pleasure.

But, not long did this august personage claim the attention of the prisoners. Their eyes were instantly attracted to a man who stood on the right of Baloa, with his hand resting on the throne-chair. He wore a pair of short, loose trousers, confined at the waist by a belt of shells. A flowing garment, of a blue color, partially covered his shoulders and chest, revealing his breast, which was tattooed.

His hair was oiled, and his face clean shaven, but he was a *white man*, and as such instantly drew the attention of the captives. That he was a person of importance among the savages, was apparent from his dress and position.

He maintained his position beside Baloa, while the latter scrutinized his prisoners.

"Ugh—much prisoner—ver' good," grunted the king; "much nice girl," he added, looking intently at Kitty, who, in return for this compliment, scowled at him. "Much good. Many prisoners—have feast by an' by. You 'Mericans?"

Charlie said "Yes."

"Ugh—much good. What say Nalote?"

He looked inquiringly at the white man.

"Baloa is great," replied the white man, gravely. "I will ask them a few questions. What is the cause of your presence here?" he asked, turning to the party.

Charlie replied by detailing their adventures.

"You are Americans?" he continued, scrutinizing them sharply.

"We are."

"Kitty," whispered Mabel, "I can not help thinking that he looks familiar. Is there any thing in his appearance that strikes you so?"

"Slightly," replied Kitty, never removing her fixed gaze from the man's face.

"What are your names?" questioned the man.

Charlie replied by mentioning the names of the party.

"Perhaps you will favor us with your own?" he added.

"Here, I am Nalote," was the reply; "you can not be benefited by knowing my previous name." He gazed fixedly at Mabel as he spoke.

"You are identified with these savages, then?" Charlie remarked, with quiet sarcasm.

"I am one among them," was the reply. "And as I am in power, it will behoove you to be careful of your words and actions," he added, significantly.

"We are not afraid of you, Richard Maxwell," remarked Kitty, quietly, yet looking at him steadily.

He started, then laughed disagreeably.

"You are as straight-forward as of yore, Kitty Macy," answered the demi-savage. "Perhaps a short residence among us may tame that high spirit, and teach you fear."

"An emotion which I never felt. It would be interesting from its novelty," she retorted. "I dare say you are familiar with it."

The man's eyes shone with an evil light as he directed them toward the shrinking Mabel.

"The time of my revenge is at hand," he said, quietly, yet closely marking the effect of his words. "'It is a long lane that hath no turn.' I would that John Harris were here also. You are a very pretty girl, my little Mabel, and I am 'a disconsolate widower.'"

His evil, serpent-like glance seemed to pierce the poor girl's soul. He seemed to expect her to make some demonstration in reply to this, but he was disappointed. She understood his meaning, but gave no other sign of hearing than to turn a shade paler.

Baloa, during this colloquy, sat in silence, surveying the prisoners.

"How fortunate," continued Maxwell. "I little imagined that revenge would come so soon. Fate favors me."

"Ver' good," again grunted the king; "much good. Um," he touched Captain Stewart and Dennis as he spoke, with the rod in his hand—"um much fat—ver' much good!"

An irrepressible shudder passed over the hearers.

"Cannibals," muttered Captain Stewart.

Baloa motioned with his rod toward the islanders, who surrounded the captives. With a low obeisance to the king,

they conducted the prisoners out of the room. The men were placed in a large, strong building, guarded by two savages, not far from the palace. Mabel and Kitty, accompanied by Nancy, were placed in a similar building further down the street, one savage only remaining on guard before the door.

Left alone, the two maidens sunk down on the matted floor, with hands clasped in silent sympathy. Mabel, worn out and exhausted by the events of the past two days, and appalled by the awful fate that stared them in the face, was fast giving way to despair. Kitty, stronger of constitution and of a naturally buoyant nature, was revolving in her mind the occurrences of the day, and calculating the chances of escape.

Escape! To think over the circumstances it seemed impossible. Nancy, full of despair and grief, sat with her hands clasped over her knees in silent dejection.

"Kitty," Mabel said at last, breaking the somber silence, "what *can* we do? Oh, is it not horrible! To think of being eaten, and I shudder to think of the darker fate in store for us, perhaps."

"Horrible, indeed," was the shuddering reply; "but we may be spared. If we only could escape! Mabel, is it not strange that we should find Richard Maxwell thus? We all supposed him dead, and to find him here, worse even than the savages, for he has knowledge of better things, is awful. Hark! What is that?"

She sprung up hastily, and went to the little reed-laced aperture answering for a window, followed by Mabel. There was a great commotion in the streets, loud talking and running to and fro. Presently a savage appeared, closely pursued by a large number of others.

In a moment they had passed behind the palace and were hidden from view.

While they stood wondering what the strange scene meant, the door opened and Maxwell entered.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MIDNIGHT JOURNEY.

"He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loathed him crouched—
And dreaded too."

"The danger thickens, master.

"WHAT means this commotion?" asked Kitty, as Maxwell entered.

"A prisoner escaped," was the reply.

"How many have you, besides our party?"

"One, only," he answered, seating himself.

"Richard Maxwell," said Kitty, looking at him steadily, "what do you intend to do with us?"

An evil smile spread itself over his face.

"That depends," he answered.

"On your own wicked caprice, I suppose," she said, bitterly.

"Softly, little tiger-cat, softly," was the cool reply. "It depends mostly on circumstances."

"What are they?" she demanded.

"That is my business."

"What will be done with the savage prisoner you have?"

"Well," he said, slowly, and watching the effect of his words, "I think he will be killed and eaten."

An irrepressible shudder crept over both the girls. Kitty's face settled into a look like that of a stone image.

"You are a friend," she said, slowly. Then added, as her curiosity overcame her repugnance: "Do you partake of these horrid feasts?"

"When among Romans, you must do as Romans do," was the reply, with a brutal laugh.

This was said merely to horrify his listeners. To his credit be it said, he had not yet descended into this barbarity.

Turning his gleaming eyes upon Mabel, the villain continued:

"You are quite as pretty, Mabel, as you gave promise of being when a child. My first wife was an ugly wretch, but she saved my life, and, of course, I am grateful. But she was unmistakably ugly. I flatter myself that my *second wife* will be better looking."

His sneering emphasis on the word "second wife," aroused Kitty's blood. She turned her gaze upon her cousin, whose waxen face was the hue of death.

"Richard Maxwell," she exclaimed, hotly, "were I a man I would tell you to the earth! and afterward I would cut off my hand contaminated by touching you."

Her slender form was drawn to its full height, her face full of scorn, her brown eyes blazing. Maxwell looked at her admiringly.

"Splendid spirit!" he ejaculated. "King Baloa *adores such.*"

Again his sneering emphasis brought the blood to her face.

"Burglar, convict, savage, your words are worthy of you!" she retorted. "Your savage wife evinced extraordinary taste in her choice."

He laughed, and arose. "Your shafts are harmless," he said. "You are in my power. I must now leave your company. Adios."

Neither returned any answer, and, with another light, mocking laugh he left the room. Both went to the window and stood watching him, until he entered the building in which Charlie and the others were confined. The village was built next the sea, and the waves lapped the white beach within a few yards of their prison. While standing there, the girls saw, what had before escaped their notice—namely, another island, somewhat smaller than the one they were on, and lying about two miles distant. A faint smoke curling up from one side of it indicated the presence on it of human beings.

Time passed on, and they had been upon the island nine days. Still they were unmolested in their prison—a fact for which they could not account. Every day Maxwell called at either prison, and generally Baloa accompanied him. The latter was stupid almost to idiocy, and was ruled entirely by Maxwell.

The night of the tenth day of their captivity settled darkly down, and at nine o'clock a slow rain began falling.

"Kitty," Mabel said, as they sat listening to the falling rain, "do you not wish we could know what Charlie and the others are doing? I am sure they will not sit idle and make no attempt to escape. I am puzzled at their inaction. There must be a good reason for it. Every day adds to our danger, but plan as they may, they can not communicate with us. Oh, if I were a man! That villain frightens me so, I hardly dare speak in his presence."

"I wish we had Charlie's pistol," said Kitty. "I do not fear so much for myself as for you, but if we had that, I would shoot the cowardly villain if he but dared to touch us."

"How tired I am," Mabel said, wearily, "and Nancy is already asleep."

She threw herself on the mat beside her, and was soon in the realms of sleep. Kitty also lay down and soon dropped into a troubled slumber. About midnight she awoke, and lay tossing about for an hour, vainly wooing the "drowsy god," and finally arose, thinking to walk about awhile to conquer her restlessness.

Pacing up and down the room with clasped hands, her thoughts rested painfully on their position. Escape was the uppermost thing in her mind, but how to do it, was the question. She could see no way, at present, and paced restlessly up and down in the darkness, revolving the matter in her mind.

Suddenly a thought struck her. She went to the window and looked out. All was silent, save the guard's footsteps, as he walked to and fro. Darkness brooded over the village, and the rain for a short time ceased falling. That it had not ceased for long was evident from the appearance of the sky.

For an instant the girl stood irresolute, then turned and listened to see if her companions still slept. Their deep, regular breathing soon assured her of their slumber and she turned once more to the window. This was a square aperture about two feet in size each way, and was filled with a stout lacing of very strong reeds. To attempt to break them, Kitty knew, would be useless.

Taking her pen-knife from her pocket she began her work.

In a comparatively short time she had severed the reeds on one side of the window, close to the casing. It was hard work, and her hands ached intensely, but not for a moment did she pause in her labor. Swiftly and noiselessly she worked on, and soon had the reeds across the bottom severed likewise. So stiff and strong was the lace-work, that it remained in its place quite as well as before it was cut.

Pausing an instant to assure herself that her companions still slept, the brave girl gathered up the skirt of her dress that it might not impede her movements, and mounted the window-sill. Cautiously pushing the reeds outward, she listened for the guard's footsteps. He was slowly pacing along the veranda at the further end of the building. Waiting until he had reached the further end of the veranda, Kitty noiselessly dropped to the ground, and stood for a moment to regain her breath. Then she started forward, keeping in the darkest shadow and moving with great caution.

The darkness prevented her seeing objects a few yards distant, but the street was straight and she had no difficulty in following it.

Her design was to visit the prison of Charlie, Captain Stewart, and Dennis. In half an hour after she left her own, she stood within the shade of its walls. Reconnoitering silently she saw that there was only one guard, and he was walking slowly up and down before the door.

In an instant the brave girl had reached the other end of the building and stood beside the window. This was similar to the one in the building she occupied, but the intense darkness inside the room prevented her from seeing the prisoners. How to attract their attention without arousing the guard's suspicions was the somewhat difficult problem that now presented itself. Several modes suggested themselves, but were discarded as impracticable, but she finally decided on the following: groping about in the darkness she succeeded in finding a number of small pebbles, and these she tossed one by one through the reeds in the window.

In a moment there was a slight rustling inside, followed by whispered words. Then there was a sound as of a person hitching across the floor, followed by Charlie's voice close beside the window, asking, "Who is there?"

"It is I—Kitty," she replied in a cautious whisper, with her face close to the reeds.

"What is the matter?" he asked, hurriedly; "has any thing happened?"

"No. I wanted to know what you were doing, or going to do, and I came to see. Have you formed any plan of escape?"

"None. We are bound hand and foot. It was with difficulty I reached the window. We can do absolutely nothing, of ourselves. How did you leave your prison? Not by the door?"

"No, by the window. I cut the reeds."

"And came alone? It was a great risk, Kitty," he said, gravely.

"I know. But I could not stop for that," was the heroic answer. "We *must* escape, Charlie, and there is no time to lose. Why not try to-night? I will cut your bonds, and once free you can work."

"It is too late to night," replied Charlie; "it will be dawn very soon—too soon for us to reach any place of safety. To-morrow night, Kitty, come if you can, as soon as the village is silent. How is Mabel?"

"I left her asleep. She is worn out with fatigue and fear. Maxwell has been there nearly every day. Charlie, how does it happen that these cannibals spared him?"

"He said he terrified them at first with firearms. Afterward Baloa's sister took a fancy to him and saved him for her husband, and, as brother-in-law of the king, he soon gained power. Besides he is educated and civilized, and a superior mind will command respect even among savages.

"It is time you returned, Kitty. Should Mabel awake and miss you, your absence might be discovered. Be very careful, my darling, and do not encounter any one on your way back. I tremble to think of the consequences to yourself."

"I will be very careful, Charlie. Have you your pistol?"

"No; Maxwell took it from me, and the *governor* now has it."

"Very well; I will go now. Expect me early to-morrow night. Heaven guard us until then, and aid our plans. Good-night."

With these words the fearless girl disappeared in the darkness, leaving the young man in a state of mingled hope and anxiety. The rain had again commenced falling slowly, and this rendered it possible for Kitty to proceed with less caution than she had been hitherto forced to use. In a short time she had reached the building she occupied, and stood beneath the window. The guard continued pacing his beat, and with a murmured prayer of thankfulness for the success of her undertaking, she entered the window. Pulling the reeds to their place, she hung her sacque in such a position as to partially shade the window, and then turned toward Mabel, who had awakened and spoken to her.

In a few words she explained all that had taken place, and in reply to Mabel's startled cry of, "Oh, Kitty, how dared you?" answered with a touch of her old vivacity:

"Dared! Why, Mab, you know I am never afraid. Wait till this hour to-morrow, and we will snap our fingers at Richard Maxwell and the rest of these cannibals. So, courage, my frightened cousin; the little mouse is gnawing the net."

It was with renewed courage, and hope high in their breasts, that the two girls resumed their couches. Alas! how soon was this hope to turn to despair!

At a comparatively late hour in the morning they were aroused from slumber by the sound of voices outside the building. They had barely risen when one of the women entered with their breakfast. This was hardly eaten when the noise outside was renewed, and shortly afterward the door opened to admit Maxwell. At sight of him a chill struck the hearts of both the maidens. His evil face wore a smile of conscious power and triumphant villainy that struck them with a sense of impending evil.

Taking a seat, he bowed with mock politeness and servility.

"I rejoice to see you look so blooming this morning, Mabel," were his first words. "You were looking quite indisposed yesterday."

"Thank you." Her tones were cold and emotionless.

"Of course you have noticed the little island lying off west," he continued, "and doubtless admired it. I am going

over there this morning, and have called for you to accompany me."

He watched her closely, still with that evil, mocking smile on his face.

"I prefer remaining here," she said, quietly, yet distinctly.

"And I prefer you to go," was the answer. "You will please to put on your wraps; and, as you will doubtless not return immediately, you may as well bid your cousin good-by."

Mabel's face was stern and resolute, though ashy white.

"Richard Maxwell," she said, firmly, "I will never leave this place with you, of my own accord. And if there is a spark of manliness left in your bosom, I pray you to heed its promptings and leave me in peace."

"Ah!" he said, with a gleam of admiration in his eyes, "so there is some fire there after all. I had thought it was all absorbed by this little tiger-cat here. But, Mabel Harris," and his face grew dark, "you will go with me. Come!"

"Never!" She stood resolutely beside Kitty and did not stir.

"Do you know," he said, slowly, "that a word of mine would consign your whole party to instant death? I have good reason to hate you and yours. Beware how you trifle with me!"

Still she stood motionless, though her face was the hue of death. A pained shudder ran over her.

"I can not," she gasped at last.

He strode up to her and placed his hand on her shoulder. She shrunk as if an adder had bitten her.

"You *shall* go," he hissed, and lifting her slight form in his arms, caught up her bonnet and sacque, and striding past the guard, walked rapidly to the beach.

A faint cry broke from Mabel's white lips, and penetrated to Kitty's ears. She started from her statue like posture, and skillfully eluding the outstretched hands of the guard, bounded down to the beach.

"Richard Maxwell," she cried, clutching his arm, "for God's sake let her remain here! I beg, I implore you to leave her."

He laughed scornfully, and struck her hand from his arm, as the guard came up.

"I am deaf to entreaties, my dear," he said mockingly, as he stepped into the boat with Mabel still in his arms. "So fare-thee-well, and who knows when we three shall meet again?"

He pushed the boat from the shore, placing Mabel beside him. She stretched forth her hands with a wild cry.

"Oh, Kitty, save me! Save me!"

A light, mocking laugh from the man beside her echoed her words; but that white, anguished face, and agonized cry, haunted Kitty Macy for many a weary day.

CHAPTER IX.

A "DEAD" MAN.

"Ho, master, we're in for it."

For some minutes after the noise of the falling rock had subsided, dying away in ghostly echoes among the caverns, no one spoke. At last John Harris broke the silence.

"The entrance is closed, and we are prisoners!"

It was a fact no one felt inclined to dispute.

"That's about as near the aktoal facts of the case as we could come by deliberatin' on it fur a fortni't," remarked Pel-tiah. "Howsomever, there's rarely any thing but's got two sides to it, an' this has, too. You see there's jist a chance that there may be a hole out somewhere else, even if we can't move this stone, which I move we try to. Lay to, here!"

Shoulders were placed against the rock, and strength exerted without avail. It would not move a hair's-breadth. In a short time there was a suspension of labor, and a consultation. In the passage between the rooms the torches had been extinguished, and they were in total darkness. To their dismay they found, upon search, that they had no matches. The outside clothing of all, in the pocket of which were the matches, had been left outside the entrance to the cave.

Here was a dilemma. Lights there were none, but inaction was impossible, and further explanations were entered upon in the darkness.

From the third cavern an opening was found which led into an apparently large room, but the darkness was so intense that they had little means of knowing its exact size.

"Now then," said Brown, as all four were groping about in the room, "jest you all be a leetle keertful. We don't know how it is here, an' may git inter diffikilty if we don't keep our eyes peeled, figgeratively speaking."

"Heap a good 'twould do," growled Cudjo, from the other side of the cavern. "Can't see a blessed inch afore my nose. I'm jest a-goin' to find a hole out, or bu'st a-tryin'. It's wuss nor the death-valley."

"Keep cool," admonished the hunter, "no use 'n gittin' excited. You may step off som'ers, if you don't keep yer wits together."

The words had hardly left his lips when there was a frenzied howl from the direction of Cudjo, followed by a shuffling noise, and another howl that seemed to go down into the earth, and finally ceased altogether.

"What is the matter?" asked Vernon, in a startled tone.

There was no answer. Brown instantly started for the place, cautiously feeling the way with his hands. Arrived there he found a hole, and feeling carefully about it, found that it led down a steep inclined plane.

"He's gone down," he announced, after a moment. "Here's a hole."

"Cudjo," called out Mr. Harris, "are you hurt?"

A hollow groan came up from the depths below, apparently from no great distance.

"If you are able, speak," demanded Mr. Harris.

"I'm dead," came in sepulchral tones from below.

"How can you talk then?" was Brown's pertinent query.

"Cudjo," again said Mr. Harris, "if you are able to tell us how badly you are injured—"

"I'm killed, I tells you," was the hollow response.

In spite of the serious appearance of the situation, the words brought a smile to every face.

"Consarn it!" called out Peltiah, testily, "if you're dead, you've got a good voice left, anyhow. S'pozen you try to git up an' see if you're reddy for a post-mortem examination. You *may* find yerself a leetle more lively 'n you think."

"I've all broke to pieces," were the next words, still in the same hollow tones. "Let a fellar die in peace, can't you?"

"You confounded dolt," ejaculated Brown. "I'll throw a stone down on you if you don't git up. Start your stumps or here it goes!"

This elicited a sprightly movement from the dead man, which brought him to a sitting posture. Carefully feeling of his limbs and chest, he discovered that there were no broken bones. Considerably relieved by his discovery, he ventured to rise to his feet, when he found, much to his surprise that he was not hurt beyond a few bruises.

"I say dar," he called out. "I ain't hurt 'tall. I've only foolin' ye. How 'm I goin' ter git up? It's darker here'n Egypt, an' I kin hear water a-roarin' somewhere."

Now that Cudjo mentioned it, all were conscious of hearing a faint, roaring sound, which they had not before noticed.

"Explore the place," returned Mr. Harris. "You may find a way out."

"Look out, an' don't fall off som'ers ag'in," called out the guide. "I've been clear 'round this wall. Boyd, feel to the right, there."

The young man did as directed, but found no opening. The circuit of the room had been made without success, and nothing now remained to be done save to follow Cudjo.

"Here goes to try it," said Vernon, as he carefully placed his feet on the plane. "I will go first and report."

He let go his hold on the rock and began sliding down, quite slowly at first, but soon with an increased velocity that nearly took away his breath. In an instant he had reached the foot of the plane and stood upright.

"Perfectly smooth," he called to those above. "Start aright, and the journey is easy. Cudjo?"

"Yah, yah," responded that worthy, who was down on his knees near by, chewing the darkness. "Tell you, Mars' Vernon, dis yer's the all-fire-test place. Can't see my hand afore me. Like to knock my nose off 'gainst the wall, manit ago."

"You must drive slow," remarked Brown, who, with Mr. Harris, had safely made the descent. "Keep yer paws stuck

out afore you, as a guard. *I'm goin' fur thet water. Mebby it 'll lead to a place out.*"

He dropped to his knees, and began crawling in the direction of the sound. Mr. Harris and Vernon began feeling along the wall, and the latter soon found a small opening. Into this he advanced, and after going a considerable distance saw a gleam of light ahead. Hastening forward, he soon assured himself that it led to the open air, and turned about to inform his companions.

"Hello!" he shouted, on reaching the end of the passage. "Where are you?"

"Here!" responded Mr. Harris and Cudjo, the former sounding some distance off. "What's up?"

"I have found a passage leading to the outer world," responded the young man. "Where is Brown?"

"I do not know," answered Mr. Harris, groping his way toward Vernon. "Hello, Brown!"

There was no answer save the echoes. Repeated calls elicited no response.

"Wait," exclaimed Vernon; "I will go and get a torch."

He darted along the passage, gained the outer world, and hastening around to the place where they had entered the cave, procured a torch and matches, and hastened back. In a moment he stood, torch in hand, in the cavern. Now that the light revealed it, it appeared to be a monstrous room, stretching off into the darkness at the further end. Search soon brought to light the entrance to a narrow corridor, and along this they hastened, the sound of running water growing louder as they advanced. After going some distance the corridor broadened into a small room, from whence there led a second passage-way, too low to enable a man to enter, save on his hands and knees.

"Hello!" shouted Vernon, placing his face to the aperture.

"Hey!" came back the faint cry.

"Come out!" shouted Vernon, at the top of his voice.

Silence followed for a space, broken by a rustle, as the hunter crept along the passage.

"By the jumping Jingo!" he ejaculated, as he emerged from the passage-way. "If yer hain't got a light. You've found a way out, I naterally kalkerlate?"

"Exactly," said Vernon. "What did you find at the end of that passage?"

"Find? I kind o' konsider, young fellar, that I *found* sev'ral things. I've got proof to 'stablish the fact. You understand?"

"Well, what did you find?" repeated Boyd.

"Younker," said the hunter, striking an attitude, and speaking solemnly, "jest you look at me, *an'* see if you shouldn't think, judgin' from surface indications, that I *did* find suthin'."

Vernon held up his torch and surveyed the hunter with some curiosity. His appearance was grotesque.

His hat was pushed back on the back of his head, and his hair hung from beneath it in straggling, water-soaked locks, down each side of his face. His garments were dripping wet, and upon one side of his face rose an immense dark bunch. His nose had the appearance of a nose fresh from a prize-fight.

"Well," ejaculated Vernon, "you do look as if you had been somewhere, whether you found any thing or not."

"Hain't I?" cried Peltiah. "Wal, you may jest b'lieve it. Ye see, I crawled along that passage till I come to a room where the water was. I could hear it up to t'other end of the place 'plashin' along, an' started that way on my hands an' knees, careful-like, but, I'll be dodwholloped, if I didn't hit my nose on one o' them peaked humps we seen back yender in sich quantities, an' nigh about broke it. In course I nat'rally jerked up my head, and bump! it went ag'in' a rock, an' while I was tryin' to keep my temper under these mysterious dispensashuns o' Providence, I got near the edge o' the water, where it was still, an' I hadn't an idee 'twas there, an' the dirt crumbled off an' in I went. Gittin' out I knocked my face here, an' were jest a speckelatin' on the chances o' my beauty's ever returnin' to me when I heerd you holler. So out I come, an' here I be. You understand?"

"You were unfortunate," said Mr. Harris, as he concluded. "I suppose, now, we are ready to leave the cave. Should we experience a second shock of the earthquake we may be walled in beyond escape."

“Precisely thus,” said the hunter, “an’ that bein’ so, forrard march I”

“Now,” said Vernon, as they reached the open air, “what are we going to do? Keep on our way to the gold cave?”

“I say, yes,” said Brown.

“Me too,” chimed in Cudjo.

“And I am willing,” said Mr. Harris.

“Wal, then, that’s settled,” said the hunter. “So on we go. Pick up yer shootin’-irons an’ percipitate yerselves forward. The earthquake has bid us adoo, I guess.”

The party at once moved forward under the guidance of the hunter. The dull, lurid glare had passed from the sky, and the birds were singing in the branches. The earthquake had passed.

Traveling steadily, and meeting with no adventure on the way, the close of the following day found them nearing the gold cave, discovered in so strange a manner by the hunter.

The country here was beautiful. There were no plains in the immediate vicinity of the cave, but beautiful groves and open glades, intersected with small streams, together with occasional rocky hills, formed a pleasant landscape.

“Wal, we’re at the end of our journey, about,” remarked Brown, as they approached a tall, rocky butte that shot away up into the clear air. “Right about here is the cave, you see. Oh, ’tain’t right *here*, of course,” as Cudjo stared around, “but in ’bout ten minutes you’ll see it, I reckon.”

“Vernon,” said Mr. Harris, as the hunter and Cudjo passed a few yards ahead of them, “we shall soon have to start for San Francisco. The *Marguerite* is due in August, and it is a long journey thither on foot as we are. If those Apaches had not stolen our horses, we, of course, could reach there in a much shorter time.”

“Yes,” returned the young man, “I am aware that we have not much more time to devote to wandering. But I would like to get a little of the gold in this cave.”

“It would render you more comfortable, certainly,” replied Mr. Harris, “but you are in no danger of suffering from poverty. I think we may spend a couple of weeks here before starting for home. Have you in any measure satisfied your curiosity concerning the country?”

"Well, I confess I am pretty well cured of any propensity which I might have had for roving," returned Vernon, with a smile. "I shall settle down with considerable satisfaction I think. But, Brown is calling to us; let us hasten on."

The hunter stood beside the butte leaning on his rifle.

"Wal, younker," were his first words as they came up, "here's the cave, an' now you want to git redly to dig. In course the almighty dollar ain't already molded an' layin' atop of the ground waitin' for you. No, in the course o' natur' I should say it 'twan't. You understand?"

"I should think not," returned the young man, laughingly. "But where is the cave?"

"*Here.*"

The hunter worked his way among the cedar bushes, and pulling them aside, disclosed a small opening in the rock. Lighting a piece of torchwood he slid down the inclined plane leading from the opening, followed by Vernon Boyd. Then, holding aloft the torch, he shouted to the others to come on.

A moment more, and all four stood in the cavern adjoining the entrance-way. From this, several smaller caverns branched off, through the first of which there gurgled a tiny brook. Examination showed that there was considerable gold in this cavern, though it was hardly "full" of the treasure, as the hunter had said.

"Well, where are our implements of labor?" propounded Mr. Harris, surveying the soft earthen floor of the cave.

"Here's a couple of picks, an' a trowel," replied Peltiah, producing the articles in question from a corner of the room. "Next time I was up to San Francisco arter I found the cave, I got these. I *had* an idee of diggin', but, 'twan't any fun at all, as I soon discovered, an' I throwed 'em down, an' took to huntin' an' trampin' ag'in. These, with this sieve, will do for you. 'Twon't be so handy as havin' the reg'lar tools, but it's the best we can do."

"Well," said Vernon, "let the gold rest while we have some supper. I'm hungry."

"Count me in dar," said Cudjo. "I'se jest about famished."

"*Dawl men* never eat," remarked Brown, slyly

"Wal, we's alive," retorted the negro, with a sheepish look. Supper, which was cooked outside the cave, being eaten, the camp relapsed into slumber.

CHAPTER X.

DRIVEN BY FATE.

"Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it,
Meekness is weakness, strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth, still it is Thor's day."—LONGFELLOW.

MABEL HARRIS watched the fast receding shore as the little boat sped onward, with a calmness born of despair. She saw the guard seize her cousin and place her once more within the prison; saw the waves momentarily growing wider between herself and those she loved, and sat silently beside the man who had power to change all this, but whose fiendish passions feasted on the agony of human hearts.

He watched her with eager, triumphant eyes, but did not break the silence till the boat touched the beach. Even then he only held out his hand to assist her, saying: "Come," and smiled a cruel smile to see her obey him passively and in silence.

"I shall triumph," he thought; "already she is changed. Discipline is good for these fiery spirits."

He led the way across a little rise of ground, and entered a cluster of buildings. On every side Mabel saw savages engaged in manufacturing articles from the palm and cocoa trees—cloth, rude dishes, and architectural ornaments, and rightly guessed that the buildings were erected merely for manufacturing purposes. In them the laborers lodged, to save the time which would otherwise be spent in going to and fro from the larger island.

To one of the smaller, stronger buildings, Maxwell conducted the girl, and having seen her safely inside the room, turned to depart, saying:

"Here are your quarters for the present, my fair cousin, and I warn you that it will depend wholly on *yourself* whether you leave here soon or not. Your fate is in your own hands."

The door swung slowly to, and Mabel was alone. Alone, in the power of a villain, disheartened and despairing, she sunk down on the matted floor, and burying her face in her hands, sobbed aloud.

Throughout the long day, which seemed to be endless, she sat there. No one came near her, but outside she heard the talk of the working savages, and bearing the voice of Maxwell occasionally, knew that he had not left the island. As the dark of night was settling down, the door swung slowly inward, and looking up she saw once more his hated face. In his hand he carried a tray containing victuals, which he placed before her, and then seated himself near by.

"Eat," he said, seeing that she made no movement to do so. "You can not live on air alone."

"Why should I try to live?" she said, bitterly. "Life is a burden I would gladly lay down."

"Nonsense. You may yet be happy and surrounded with friends," was the reply. "It depends solely on yourself."

She did not answer, but her eyes questioned him mutely.

"Mabel," he began, earnestly, "promise to marry me, and you and yours shall leave these islands unmolested."

She put up her hands as if to ward off a blow, with a low cry.

"There is nothing so awful in the idea," he went on, noting the act. "I am not so old or ugly that you need view me with repulsion. I have a small yacht-like boat, in which we will secretly leave the island. Steering north-east, we should soon be in the track of ships and be picked up. Once in a civilized country, we can be married. Do you consent?"

"No, no!" she gasped, "I can not!"

He watched her closely. "How much better will be your fate if you stay here?" he asked.

She did not answer.

"You had better consent," he said.

"Oh, I can not, I can not!" she cried. "Do not ask me; I will never consent. Death would be preferable."

"Oh, yes," was the mocking reply, "but Death does not come at our bidding. There is a fate worse than being my wife. You have dearly loved ones on the island; on you depends not only your own fate, but theirs also. Consent to be my wife, and I will save them. Refuse, and I swear to you that they shall perish before your eyes. I will not lift a finger to save them."

A low moan from the girl was his only answer. Up from her tortured heart came a great cry—a name which her lips refused to frame—"Vernon!"

Silently the villain sat waiting her reply. "I can promise," she thought; "I *must* promise to save them, and then when they are beyond his power, I can die."

She lifted her head.

"Well?"

"I promise to be your wife," she said, faintly. A gleam of malignant triumph lighted up his features.

"Swear it," he said—"swear that if I save you and yours, you will be my wife, as you hope for heaven."

"I swear it."

Tremblingly her white lips framed the reply. With the words went from her all hope of all that life had worth the having.

Maxwell rose to his feet.

"Very good. To-morrow we will return to the other island, and to-morrow night we will leave here forever. Baloa is an old dolt, or I should not have the power I hold. As it is, escape will be easy."

He left the room, and once more Mabel was alone.

As soon as the first rays of the morrow's sun shone over the waters, Richard Maxwell sought the prison of his betrothed wife. He undid the awkward fastening of the heavy door, and entered the room. Glancing around, he stood in bewilderment. She was not there! Hastily stepping forward, he caught up the mats and skins forming the couch and looked beneath them. In vain! Nothing was there. Again he gazed about the room. Every article remained undisturbed, but living occupant of the room there was none. Where was Mabel?"

He left the room and questioned the workmen. None of

them had seen her. Hastening down to the water's edge, he looked eagerly up and down the beach. The little boat he had brought her to the island in, was gone.

"She has gone over to the other island," he thought. "But, what did she go for, and how did she get out of the prison? I *know* I fastened the door. There is no accounting for a woman's freaks. I will go over at once. If I can safely get away with the party, my revenge will be certain. My wife! Ha! ha! John Harris would rather see her dead before him. But, that will avail him nothing. She has sworn it, and by —! I'll see that she keeps her oath."

He stepped into another boat that was moored near, and calling two of the savages to assist in rowing, started for the other island.

Charles Harris stood looking from the rude window of his prison out on the heaving ocean. During the night the wind had blown violently, and the sea was still rough. He had dragged himself up beside the window, and, bound hand and foot, half stood, half leaned, against the wall, watching a boat coming across from the other island. His gaze was eager and expectant, but full of a terrible sternness.

"It is *he*," he muttered, watching the foremost occupant of the still distant boat. "Base villain, I could throttle him. And he is alone with these two savages. I believe that *was* Mabel I saw with him yesterday, though the boat was too far distant for me to ascertain beyond a doubt. Oh, if I but knew! And yet, I am powerless."

He ground his teeth together, still keeping his eyes on the approaching canoe.

"And Kitty did not come last night," he went on, pursuing his train of thought; "what could I have detained her? Many things might, though, it is a hazardous undertaking. A day in this place may be fatal to us. If I was only free."

He moved his bound hands impatiently, and looked again at the boat. It was fast nearing the shore.

"By the powers," said Dennis, who, together with Captain Stewart, lay on the floor. "It's mighty slow livin', this is. It's meself that's sick of it intirely. By gorra, if I had my hand on the throat of that greasy divil, that pokes his ugly snoot in here wonts an' awhile, I'd choke him, with a good

will too. What are they going to do wid us, onyhow? Och, Misther Charles, an' wasn't it meself that lowld ye we'd git into the dirty claws of the bla'guarra islanders? An' niver a word ov it would ye hear to. But now, be jabbers, I reckon ye've found that it's more thruth than poetry thare was in it, intirely."

"They will kill and eat us, doubtless," said the captain, in reply to Dennis' question.

"Arrah, an' it's tough 'ai'in' they'll have," retorted the Irishman, turning himself with difficulty, "as fur as meself is consarned, at the least. An Irishman never dejects aisy. Be the bones of Fingal, I hope if they thry that same they'll get enough of it? May the meat sthick in their tathe till eternity!"

"If we pass this day unmolested, we may be able to escape to-night, with Miss Macy's help," remarked the captain.

"Faith an' sure, an' it's a brave little gal she is too," put in Dennis. "She'd spile the b'uty on that greasy blaggard if she had the mussel, 'fore ye could—"

"Hush!" interrupted Charlie, hastily. "Some one comes."

"Begorra," said Dennis, *sotto voce*, as the door opened to admit Maxwell, "it's that same dirty spalpeen. May the devil fly away wid his grandmother!"

"If you had said *him*, it would have been more to the point," muttered Captain Stewart.

Maxwell advanced, and addressing Charles Harris, asked, abruptly:

"Have you seen your sister, this morning?"

"No. By what possibility could I have done so?"

"Her own notion, perhaps," was the curt reply. "Though she would doubtless seek her cousin instead of coming here."

"Coming here? Seek Kitty! What do you mean?" demanded the young man, in considerable agitation.

"Simply that I left her on the other island last night, and this morning she is gone. A boat is also missing. Of course she came here."

"Villain!" ejaculated Charlie, beside himself with grief and anger, "you have murdered her. Oh, that I were free, I would choke the breath from your body!"

"Softly," said Maxwell, "softly. I tell you I left her alive and well in that room, and she is *gone without my knowledge!*"

There was truth in his manner, and despite himself the young man felt it.

"Gone," he repeated, "gone—and where?"

"Over here, of course. I shall find her with her cousin."

He hardly felt as confident as he spoke, but turned and left the room.

Kitty, sitting pale and silent on the matted floor of her prison, looked up as the door opened and beheld Maxwell. He glanced around, and then stopped with a blank face.

"Where is Mabel?" he demanded.

"Mabel!" She sprung to her feet in surprise. "Who knows better than you, Richard Maxwell? Where is she?"

"I do not know. I supposed her here."

"Liar!"

He hardly heard her. The girl's sudden disappearance had upset all his plans. Then, after a moment's thought, he explained to Kitty. She was utterly incredulous at first, but his manner at length convinced her.

"Gone, and the boat, too! And the wind blew a gale last night," she said, in horror:

Where was Mabel?

"I will search the other island," Maxwell said, struck by this thought. "If she is not there—"

He did not finish the sentence, but went out, grinding his teeth together, with an expression of baffled rage on his face.

Four hours later he sat in the veranda of the royal palace with King Baloa, the latter snoring in his chair, when a messenger came from the other island. The whole island had been thoroughly searched, but no trace of the missing girl discovered. Maxwell had headed the search, but, tired out, he had returned an hour since, leaving the savages to finish it.

"Foiled!" he muttered, as the messenger departed. "Foiled when my revenge seemed certain! What can I do now?"

He arose and walked down to the beach. While pacing moodily up and down, his preoccupied mind became conscious

of something before his eyes which he had been abstractedly gazing at for several minutes. The waves rolling in had borne it up on the beach, and ~~as~~ he stepped now, it lay at his feet.

He stooped and picked it up. It was a misty affair of thread and lace, soaking with salt-water and tangled with bits of sea-weed, but he recognized it at once. It was a ~~veil~~ Mabel's veil—the one she had attached to her hat. While he stood looking at it, the waves brought in something else—the hat itself.

As he stood looking at these messengers of the wind and waves, did no thought of remorse for the part he had acted against the girl who might be lying at the bottom of the ocean amid the slime and ooze occur to him? No! He only thought of his baffled scheme of vengeance.

But there they lay—mute messengers of the fate of their wearer, confronting him.

Once more, where was Mabel?

He stood in silent thought for a time, evidently studying some plan for the future.

"I'll do it!" he said at last, starting forward. "Baffled in this, I will yet find some method of revenge. I can not escape alone, and I am tired of living here. Yes, I will do it."

He caught up the dripping hat, and strode rapidly up the beach. Suddenly he heard a loud shout, and looking up beheld a large number of savages, with Baloa in their midst, around the door of Charlie's prison. Evidently there was something of importance about to be done. But what?

CHAPTER XI.

DRAWING NEAR.

"That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter."—TENNYSON.

IN the parlor of the San Francisco hotel, sat Mr. Harris and Vernon Lloyd. On both faces were lines of care and suffering. Silence had reigned between them, which Mr. Harris broke by saying:

"Vernon, while there is any uncertainty there is hope. I can not help cherishing a hope, that through some agency my children were saved. I can not be satisfied until I see and question the sailor who was saved."

The young man sighed deeply. "I can call him," he said. He touched the bell, and a servant appeared.

"Will you be kind enough to request the man who was rescued from the *Marguerite* to come here? Tell him we would like to see him," he said, courteously.

The servant bowed and withdrew, and a moment later a sailor, bronzed and weatherbeaten, with cap in hand, stood before them.

"I have been informed that you were one of a boat-load saved from the *Marguerite*," said Mr. Harris. "Will you please to tell all you know about it?"

"Well, this is all I know," said the man. "The ship burned, and all the crew and passengers left her in three boats. The Harris party was all the passengers there was, and them and the captain went in the small boat. 'Twasn't calculated to live in a storm as well as our boat was, and we nearly went under. It blew a gale all night and the next day, but toward night our boat was picked up by the *Annie Bergh*. We never heard of either of the other boats afterwards, though the *Annie Bergh* stood off her course, and lay 'round about twelve hours to pick 'em up if they were about. There is no doubt but they both sunk."

"You are certain there was no other ship near which might have rescued them?" asked Vernon, eagerly.

"I couldn't swear there wasn't," replied the man, "but I think I *know* there was none, after all. The *Cyclone* came in two days after the *Annie Bergh*, and she hadn't seen anything of them. No, I think there ain't the ghost of a chance for 'em to have been rescued," added the sailor, decidedly.

"That will do, and thank you," said Mr. Harris. The man bowed and withdrew, and the gentlemen were alone.

"Vernon," the elder man said, brokenly, "there is an end to my hopes. But, we must not give way to our grief. Others have suffered before us—others will suffer after us."

The young man sat in silence, and evidently in painful thought. At last he spoke.

"I shall sail for New York to-morrow in the *Annie Bergh*. I can not stay here."

"You will return?" asked Mr. Harris.

"Perhaps so—after a time. You will stay here?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so. As well here as there."

"I have no time to spare," Vernon said, consulting his watch. "I must go at once and engage passage."

He arose and went out.

"How changed the world looks to-day," he thought as he traversed the street. "Yesterday I approached San Francisco with a happy heart. To-day, I prepare to leave it with every hope dashed to the ground. Oh, Mabel, Mabel!"

The next morning's sun looked upon the departure of the *Annie Bergh*, with Vernon Boyd upon the deck.

We return to the savage island.

Maxwell, on seeing the unusual commotion, and the savages about the door of the prison, quickened his steps and reached the spot just as Baloa had opened the door.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"Nalote will hear," declared the king, in such execrable English that we can not bring ourself to put it upon paper. "The warriors are tired of waiting. The prisoners are fat—they have been well fed. The warriors demand a feast, and they shall have it!"

The king stood within the doorway, and the captives heard every word he uttered.

"The divil fly away wid ye!" cried the irrepressible and

undaunted Irishman. "Be the powers, an' if ye thry to ate me I'll give ye a hard job ov that same! Jest loosen these cords an' I'll knock ye clane to the further end of next week."

"Hush, Dennis," said Charlie; "you will only arouse their anger."

"Divil take their angry passions!" cried Dennis. "I'll give 'em something to act like h'athens for, the spalpeens. Oeh, if I had a bit of a shillalah I'd arnament the frontispiece of that blaggard ov a king—may his stomach ache now and forever!"

Meantime the savages stood by awaiting the order of their king to take the prisoners forth. At the close of Baloa's speech, Maxwell waved his hand, with a profound bow to the king.

"Baloa is great," he said, gravely, "but he will hear the words of Nalote, and see if they are good. It is nearly noon—there is not time to-day for a great feast; let the warriors prepare to-day, and let the feast be to-morrow."

"The warriors are prepared," said the king, with a touch of sullenness in his tone.

"But I have to-day lost the girl who was to be my wife," remonstrated Maxwell. "Does Baloa think I can be joyful?"

"Nalote can take the other," replied Baloa; "me no like her—she make faces," he added, in a tone of disgust.

"But the feast—such an offering to the gods should begin before sunrise," persisted Maxwell. "I can not take the other girl—I do not like her either."

To his alarm, he found the king was determined to have his own way. Usually he deferred to Maxwell, but now he was obstinate.

"Waited long 'nough," Baloa grunted, in stubborn sullenness. "Prisoners much good."

Maxwell was at his wits' end. He saw the plans he had laid fading into thin air. He looked around on the throng of savages, and mounting the steps of the building began to address them. He spoke of their prowess, and the greatness of their king, flattering the latter personage highly.

"Baloa is great," he declared, enthusiastically, looking around upon his audience. "In all the islands of the world, there is none other so bold and skillful. See how he beat the

mighty Knokai who had warriors as many as the leaves of the trees. Knokai was great and powerful, but Baloa conquered him, Baloa is the greatest king in the world."

He paused a moment, and a murmur of applause ran through the crowd. He could see that his words had a pleasant effect on Baloa himself.

"Yes," continued Maxwell, "there is none so great as King Baloa. He rules these islands, and he has seven of the fairest maidens for his wives. His enemies fear him—they know his power, and flee away in terror at his approach. It is a year since he beat King Knokai, a year to-morrow since he sunk his canoes and drowned his warriors. We have these prisoners. They are good—there will be a great feast in honor of the great Baloa. Nalote would be there, he would rejoice. Can he not have to-day to weep for the maiden he has lost and come to the feast to-morrow? Baloa is great, and Nalote would honor him."

This piece of flattery had the desired effect upon his audience and the king. Baloa smilingly consented to delay the feast until the morrow, and the savages dispersed.

Elated with his success, Maxwell at once entered the prison, and presented the hat and veil he had found. Charles' grief was intense, but he felt a consolation in the thought that she had escaped a worse fate, by meeting death.

"And now," said Maxwell, "I have a plan to propose. You heard me persuading Baloa to leave you unmolested until to-morrow?"

"We did," was the cold reply.

"Well, if you consent to my plan, you will not be within his reach when to-morrow shall have come. Listen: I am tired of this life here—I should have left long since, had it been in my power to have done so. You want to escape. I have a large boat—an unwieldy affair as compared with those built by shipbuilders, but it is the result of poor tools to labor with, and an ignorance of boat-building. However, it will carry your party and myself, and we, together, can manage it—something no single man could do. If you are agreed, we will leave here in it to-night when the savages are asleep. Steering north-west, we shall very soon be in the track of ships, and be picked up. Do you consent?"

Charles meditated. That Maxwell was disinterestedly endeavoring to rescue them, he did not for an instant believe, but he did not doubt that he himself wished to escape, and this furnished a motive for his conduct. Escape in any way, was the thing desirable, and he weighed the matter carefully in his mind before deciding.

"Captain," he asked, "what do you say?"

"To go," was the prompt reply. "I don't mind telling you, in presence of this precious individual, that I wouldn't trust him an inch, if I could see that he had any motive besides wishing to escape. But I can't, and so I say go."

"Them are my sentiments exactly," said Dennis. "We'd a dale sight better set sail to-night in his company, than to stay here an' be made into cutlets an' skin-soup to-morrow. Begorra, an' it's meself that don't relish the idea of bein' served up hot, with aranges an' lime-juice for dressing."

"You are complimentary," said Maxwell, "but I don't mind that. You'll go?"

"Yes," said Charles. "We will go, and as I know my cousin will not consent without a line from me, or seeing me personally, you will have to take measures for such a proceeding."

Maxwell untied the young man's hands, and Charlie wrote rapidly, on a leaf torn from his note-book, a few words in pencil.

This done, Maxwell again adjusted the cords on his wrists, and armed with the paper, sought Kitty's prison.

On seeing the drenched hat and veil, the probable fate of Mabel flashed upon her, and though torn by anxiety before, she had not shed a tear. Now, at sight of the articles worn by the missing girl, and seeming to bear the story of her fate upon them, her tears flowed unrestrainedly. She remembered the white, agonized face, as she had seen it last—the wild cry for help, which she was powerless to respond to—and her soul rose up against Richard Maxwell, in a scorn and hate too great for utterance.

She listened in silence to him, while he related the meaning of the scene at Charlie's prison, which she had witnessed from her window in wonder and anxiety, and went on to unfold his scheme of escape.

"Richard Maxwell," she said, when he finished, "do you think I can believe in you? Do you imagine that I will consent to this?"

"Read this," he answered, giving her the note. She opened it and read in Charlie's well-known handwriting:

"DEAR KITTY—I think we had better consent to Maxwell's plan. Certain death awaits us otherwise. Yours, CHARLES HARRIS"

She mused a moment, then looked at Maxwell.

"Since my cousin thinks it best, I will consent," she said, regarding him steadily. "But I tell you, Richard Maxwell, that hating and despising you as I do, it is hard for me to receive a favor at your hands, even though I know that favor is offered me from a selfish motive on your part."

"You are grateful," he sneered; "small thanks one gets for attempting to benefit his fellow-creatures. But—"

"Do not add the sin of hypocrisy to your other crimes, Richard Maxwell," she flashed, angrily; "you can not deceive me. I can read your base heart like an open book."

"Ah," he returned, significantly, "perhaps you can, and *perhaps you can not*. But this is trifling. Be ready as soon as the village is quiet, and watch for me."

"You will bring my cousin here?" she said. "Otherwise I will not leave this place."

"Yes, I will bring the men with me."

With these words he left the room.

"Miss Kitty," said Nancy, who had been a silent witness to the interview, "can you see what that scamp means?"

"Not clearly," replied the young girl. "But, Nancy, we have to choose between two evils, and this seems to be the least of the two. Poor Mabel, her fate seems wrapped in mystery. How can I trust him—Mabel's murderer? And yet I have no choice."

Darkly the night shut down. Two hours before midnight the village was asleep, and an hour later there came a low rap on the door of Kitty's prison. An instant afterward it swung open, and Maxwell, followed by Charlie, Captain Stewart, and Dennis, entered.

"Ready?" inquired Maxwell.

"Yes," replied Kitty, coming forward, "all ready. Oh, Charlie, Charlie!"

At sight of him she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, darling," he whispered, while his own eyes grew misty. "Heaven still watches over us."

"But Mabel, Charlie," she sobbed. "Poor Mabel!"

"I know, dear," he answered, gently, "and it is hardest of all to have to go with the villain who caused her loss, but we have no choice save to be murdered."

"Come, hurry up," growled Maxwell; "we have no time to lose."

"How were the guards disposed of?" asked Captain Maxwell, as they all left the prison.

"I persuaded Boloa to believe they were useless," replied Maxwell. "Now follow me and be silent."

They left the village, and following along the beach a short distance, reached a miniature bay. Here, moored, lay the boat. It was a broad, flat craft, managed by two huge paddles, and one sail. In the center was a space about ten feet long and three broad, which was two feet lower than the rest of the boat. Over a part of this there was erected a rough roof, and this constituted the cabin. In one end of this Maxwell had placed two stone jars of water, a hamper of provisions, and a large basket of limes and oranges.

In a moment all were on board, the sail was set, and, with Maxwell and Dennis at the paddles, the boat moved off. Unwieldy as it looked, it moved quite rapidly, and when they were out from under the shelter of the island, where the breeze caught the sail, they sped forward like a bird.

Morning found them afar on the wide ocean, with a storm in prospect

"Oh, no, she is not dead, Mr. Boyd," she said, cheerily. "She has only fainted."

"Heaven grant it," he breathed, fervently.

Even while he spoke, there was a faint, fluttering color came to the white face, the waxen lids lifted themselves slowly, and the violet eyes looked wonderingly into his. Then, as he dropped his face to hers, she murmured:

"Oh, Vernon, are we in heaven?"

"My darling, no; you are alive and safe with me," he answered, while the sailors stood wonderingly by. The captain and Miss Easton, knowing the young man's story, comprehended.

"Come with me, child," Miss Easton said, as Mabel, her senses coming slowly back to her, raised herself from Vernon's support. "You are tired and faint. Do not question her now, wait until she is able to answer you."

She took the girl down to the cabin, where she was soon made comfortable with a suit of Miss Easton's clothing, and the care of the kind little woman and the stewardess.

Once more something like herself, Mabel wished to see Vernon. She told him all that had occurred, adding:

"And they are there, Vernon, still in the power of Maxwell, if yet alive. What shall we do?"

"I will see. Oh, Mabel, how could you have married Maxwell?"

"I would, had he fulfilled his contract, have married him, but the hour that saw me his wife would have seen me a corpse!" she answered, solemnly.

"My own! But the danger is past. It was a fearful sacrifice, Mabel, and you have been saved from making it. Thank Heaven, you are restored to me. If Charlie and the others still live——"

He was interrupted by a hurried tramping, and the captain's voice bawling:

"Boyd, Boyd!"

"I am wanted," he said, rising. "I do not see what the matter can be. I will return in a moment."

He went out, leaving Mabel alone. Overhead the bustle still continued, and the sound of excited voices came in a confused murmur down to the cabin. In an instant there

was a sound of flying footsteps, the door opened, and Mabel looked up to behold Kitty Macy!

She sprung to her feet in delighted amazement, but before she could advance a step, Charlie, Captain Stewart, Nancy and Dennis, followed by Vernon Boyd, came in.

The scene that followed was a joyful and excited one. When the excitement had somewhat subsided, and a hundred other questions been asked and answered, Mabel asked:

"How did you escape?"

"In a large boat, with Maxwell," replied Charlie.

A sharp pain stung Mabel. She asked, hastily:

"Where is he?"

"Dead."

She drew a long breath of relief. For her life she could not have helped the feeling.

"How did he die?" asked Vernon.

"A squall struck us yesterday," replied Charlie, "and he was washed overboard. Had it been more than a flaw we must all have followed him. It was severe, but short, and we could not save him. A large reed basket, half filled with fruit, was washed away also. But he was a villain; I do not know that we need mourn for him."

"After clouds, sunshine," said Kitty. "We are all safe, and in a fair way to be happy. Heaven be thanked!"

The day following was a happy one. All were light of heart; the only shadow on their happiness was the thought that they were going from Mr. Harris, who must mourn them as dead for so long a time.

"Poor papa," said Mabel, "how I long to see him. And I must wait so long!"

"Perhaps not, Miss Harris," said Miss Easton. "We may meet a ship bound for San Francisco, and you can leave the *Annie Bergh*, and board her."

"A bright thought, Miss Easton!" exclaimed Captain Stewart, who, being a bachelor of forty years, appeared to greatly admire the cheery little woman. "I would not be at all surprised if we did meet a ship, as you say."

It was even so. A few days later, they spoke the *Dauntless*, bound for San Francisco, and without her usual complement of passengers. The Harris party could return to her.

Captain Stewart decided to go on to New York. His funds were there, he declared, but our young friends shrewdly suspected that the presence of Miss Easton on board the *Annie Bergh*, influenced him in his decision.

In due time, the *Dauntless* arrived at San Francisco. Mr. Harris owned a beautiful place in the suburbs of the city, but he felt that in his loneliness he could not reside alone where he had hoped to be so happy with his children. When the *Dauntless* reached San Francisco he was boarding at a hotel, attended by Cudjo.

The happy young people went at once to the hotel, and surprised Mr. Harris sitting alone in the parlor.

At sight of his children, whom he had so bitterly mourned the father was totally overcome. For a time he could not speak, but embraced them in speechless joy.

"My children," he breathed at last, "my darling children!"

"Restored to you as by a miracle, papa," said Mabel, kissing him fondly. "God has been very good to us."

Explanations followed, and when Mr. Harris learned the great dangers they had passed through, he was filled with wonder and thanksgiving at their deliverance.

Mr. Harris and his family at once took possession of the pleasant place he owned, which was called Oakmere, from the presence of a number of oak trees in the grounds.

Vernon Boyd remained at a hotel.

It was now the last days of October, and the marriage of Mabel Harris and Vernon Boyd, and Charles Harris and Kitty Macy, who had plighted their troth on board the *Marguerite*, was arranged to take place the following May. The gentlemen were impatient of this delay, but the ladies wished it, and they had nothing to do but consent.

And so the days wore on, every one bringing nearer to them a blighting shadow that had power to shut all the sunshine from two of their lives.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SHADOW.

"But the night grew damp and cold,
The sullen wind rushed by,
I seemed to be growing gray and old,
Under that leaden sky.
I felt my cheek grow pale
And its rounded bloom decay,
The wind rushed by with a sullen wail,
Seeming to say:
'There will come no day!
Wither and waste and die away!'"

THE winter was past, and the balmy breezes of spring swept over the land. It was the first of May.

At Oakmere there were joyful preparations. It only lacked a week of the day appointed for the double wedding, and every thing was in pleasant bustle throughout the mansion. The back parlors were a wilderness of foamy laces and muslins, sheeny silks, and satins, and velvets, presided over by a hook-nosed female, with a pair of scissors dangling from her bodice, and a perpetual needle in her hand. The *trousseau* of the brides was not yet completed.

Kitchenward the war waxed furious. Nancy, in an immense white apron, and with sleeves rolled to the shoulders, flew to and fro from pantry to kitchen in a fever of culinary excitement. There were cakes on shelves, tables and cupboards, frosting of every hue on every side, and a regiment of spice-cans, cake-dishes, and pastry-spoons, on the side-table.

Cudjo, bare-armed and aproned, his black face shining with a good-humor that overflowed in bubbling little chuckles every ten minutes, was her prime minister.

On this pleasant afternoon every thing seemed unusually pleasant and happy. An hour before sunset Mabel Harris came down stairs with her garden-hat hanging over her arm, and a book in her hand. Kitty was seated at the piano,

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playing a dashing waltz, but she looked up as Mabel entered.

"Whither bound?" she asked, pausing in her playing, and holding her hands suspended over the keys.

"Only to the garden. I have to flee somewhere for peace. Between Cudjo, Nancy, the housemaids and Miss Martin, I am on the verge of distraction. Getting married appears to be a formidable undertaking."

She made a little grimace, and went out singing merrily. Did no premonition of the dark shadow hanging over her come to her?

She ran down the steps and turned into one of the paths leading off among the shrubbery. Dennis, the gardener, was tying up some vines.

"Wal, Miss Mabel," he said, as she came along, "things begin to look some like spring, don't they? There's a few grane leaves on a'most every thing. This vine will blow afore along. I've nearly broke my arms intirely, thryin' to stir the dirt good an' dape so it should grow."

"The garden does look nicely, indeed, Dennis," she replied "You take a great deal of pains with it."

She followed the winding path through the shrubbery reaching at last a small, rustic arbor, covered with vines. Seating herself on the bench inside she was soon absorbed in the book she held. She read steadily for half an hour, and then noticed suddenly that it was growing dark very fast. Looking up she saw a storm was gathering.

"The first thunder-storm of the season," she thought, as a low, rumbling sound broke on her ears. "It looks as though it would be a severe one."

She rose to her feet, and picking up her fallen hat took a step toward the door. She was arrested by the words, spoken in a light, mocking voice: "Good evening, sweetheart."

A nameless horror took possession of Mabel Harris, as that voice smote her ears. She looked toward the door. He stood there—the man she feared more than death. No ghostly apparition, no wraith conjured up by her imagination, but Richard Maxwell, alive and well.

"Not dead," she said, involuntarily, speaking her thought, as she gazed at him. "Not dead, but living!"

"Exactly so, my dear," he said, advancing toward her, "alive, and delighted to see you. I arrive very opportunely it appears." He stepped forward as if to embrace her.

"Stop, Richard Maxwell!" she exclaimed, putting out her hands to ward him off. "Stop, or I will call for assistance. You shall not touch me."

"Oh, very well," he returned, amiably, taking a seat. "We will dispense with the ceremonies usually observed between lovers, since you wish it."

He looked at her smiling. That old, evil, mocking smile, how well she remembered it.

"Perhaps you would like to know by what fortunate chance you behold me," he continued, as she stood speechless. "Your relatives doubtless recollect that a basket was washed overboard with me. Being a good swimmer I clung to that, and was picked up two hours later by a homeward bound whale-ship. Arriving here, I heard that you had ceased mourning for me, and was about to marry a young chap handsomer than I, perhaps. Very faithless in you, my dear; I had been inconsolable for your supposed loss."

He paused a moment, and looked at her. She did not speak, only stood in a half-defiant, half-shrinking attitude, and looked at him steadily.

"I was rejoiced to hear you were alive," he resumed, "and delighted that I had not arrived too late. The wedding can go on—with the important change of one of the bridegrooms. Mr. Vernon Boyd can officiate as best man if he chooses. Of course I shall occupy the place intended for him."

He looked at her complacently, but with that evil smile on his lips.

"Richard Maxwell," she said, slowly "do you suppose I will marry you? Never!"

"Of course you will, my dear," he returned, lightly. Then changing his tone. "Mabel Harris, do you think I am to be cheated of my revenge at last? Never, so help me God! *I will have revenge.* Besides, I like you. You are pretty, and will make me a nice wife. *I will have you!* You dare not disregard your oath. Remember you have sworn!"

"But only on conditions," she cried, clutching at the straw. "*You did not save me.*"

"Was it my fault that I did not, Mabel Harris?" he asked. "You know it was not. I would have saved you, as I did your party. It was no fault of mine. I fulfilled my part of the contract, and I hold you to your oath."

For an instant a fierce expression appeared on her face, and she looked as if she was about to defy him. But it faded again, giving place to one of despair. The storm was near, and the thunder rolled ceaselessly. Already a few hurrying drops gave warning of the flood to come. Mabel started as if to flee, not from the storm but from her tormentor.

"Wait," he said, noting the action. "Listen to me. You can not, in honor, disregard your oath. Dare to do so, and I will make your life a curse to you. All you hold dear I will tear from you, this man, Boyd, whom I see you love, I will murder if you defy me."

His terrible vehemence frightened her. The shock of his sudden appearance—his awful threats—stunned her. She dropped on her knees, holding up her hands.

"Have mercy!" she cried. "Be merciful and let me go. I will pray for you all my life—I will bless you forever. Only let me go."

He laughed sardonically.

"Never!" he cried. "Ask the forked lightnings about us to cease, and if they heed you, then expect me to do so also. I never will give you up. I want you, and I will have you. Nothing shall stand in my way—God himself shall not hinder me!"

Mabel shrunk back in horror. His awful blaspheming froze her blood.

"Go into the house," he continued; "you are getting wet. Go, but on this day week I shall claim you. It is useless to entreat me, I hold you to your oath. Disregard it, and I will, as I have said, make your life a curse to you. The game is in my hands at last, and nothing shall move me from my purpose. you shall be mine, I defy heaven and earth to prevent it!"

Mabel put up her hands, as if his words had been a blow. There came a blinding flash of lightning—she felt as if heaven and earth crashed together; every thing grew dim before her—and then there was a blank.

CHAPTER XIV.

JUBILATE!

Thus far our chronicle, and now we pause;
Tho' not for want of matter, but 'tis time."—BYRON.

THERE was a hurried flying of feet through the garden at Oakmere. The lightning had riven an oak tree in the garden that overhung the rustic arbor; and Mabel, the family had discovered, had not yet returned to the house. Regardless of the storm, they threaded the shrubby walks, calling her name, and listening with white faces for the response that never came.

They found her at last, lying on the ground in the arbor, her white, still face upturned to the beating rain; and beside her a prostrate figure, with the face so burnt and scarred by the lightning, as to be scarcely recognizable.

The thunderbolt had done its work, and with the impious words he had spoken yet on his lips, he had been called into eternity.

Dead, and Mabel was free! Free to love, free to live, free to be happy!

They carried her into the house, where, at last, she came back to life and consciousness. The shock, strangely enough, had not injured, only stunned her, and in a few hours she was as well as usual.

The black shadow had lifted at last forever, and nothing remained but the unclouded sunshine.

The double wedding took place at the appointed time.

It was a joyous affair, though not altogether aristocratic in every particular. Peltiah Brown was an honored guest, and enjoyed himself immensely. He gave it as his opinion that "the way things had turned out *was* surprising. Why you understand," he said, addressing Mabel as they were all gathered in the drawing-room after the ceremony was over, "I never heard on such an amazin' course of events in my life, an' I've

seen a thing or two, too, you understand. The scrapes we got into up in the mountains was cur'us enough, bein' as we got out of 'em with whole hides, but your 'venture does beat all. Howsomever, I dunno as any on 'em will go ahead of Cudjo's," added the hunter, with a sly twinkle and a glance toward the last-mentioned individual, who looked sheepishly in return. He was killed—all broke to pieces in fact, and was cured an' restored to the bosom of his lamentin' friends by a threatened dose of rocks. Some deezees be peculiar, you understand?" concluded the hunter.

"You sho' now," said Cudjo; "you'll make Miss Mabel t'ink dat ar's so, when dar arn't a morsel o' tufe in it. 'Twas all a joke jest to scare you fellars."

"Percisely thus," remarked the hunter, with a wink.

"Arrah," said Dennis, who, with Nancy, was a privileged spectator and participant in the doings of the day, "you may tell of your exploits all ye plaze, but Miss Kitty's doings will throw ye in the shade after all. Didn't she thraavel boldly an' unmolested around that cannibal village in the dead of the night alone? Faith, an' she did that same. Och, an' it's ourselves that had the surprisin' times. The day we was took I see the first blaggard savage meself, bein' out after a turtle, an' havin' a hard time to raduce the chrater to d'acent submission, turtles bein' a baste that don't die till a spell after they are killed. Sure an' I couldn't thole the musky sea-biscuits any longer. My mouth was all raw intirely, an' I couldn't chew my victuals till I got 'em clear down in my throat."

Laughter greeted this exquisite piece of Irishism, in which the Irishman joined, without knowing the cause of the merriment.

There was no wedding-tour. After the wedding Vernon Boyd and Mabel took possession of an elegant mansion in San Francisco, and Charles and Kitty continued to reside at Oakmere with Mr. Harris.

Peltiah Brown continues his hunter life among the mountains, and when visiting San Francisco always calls on his friends, the Boyds and Harrises. He is as quaint and as eccentric as of old, and often entertains his friends with stories of his wild, roving life.

Captain Stewart sails the seas in a ship far superior to the *Marguerite*, which is called the *Eunice*, that being the name of Miss Easton, who is Miss Easton no longer, but Mrs. Captain Stewart.

THE END.

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
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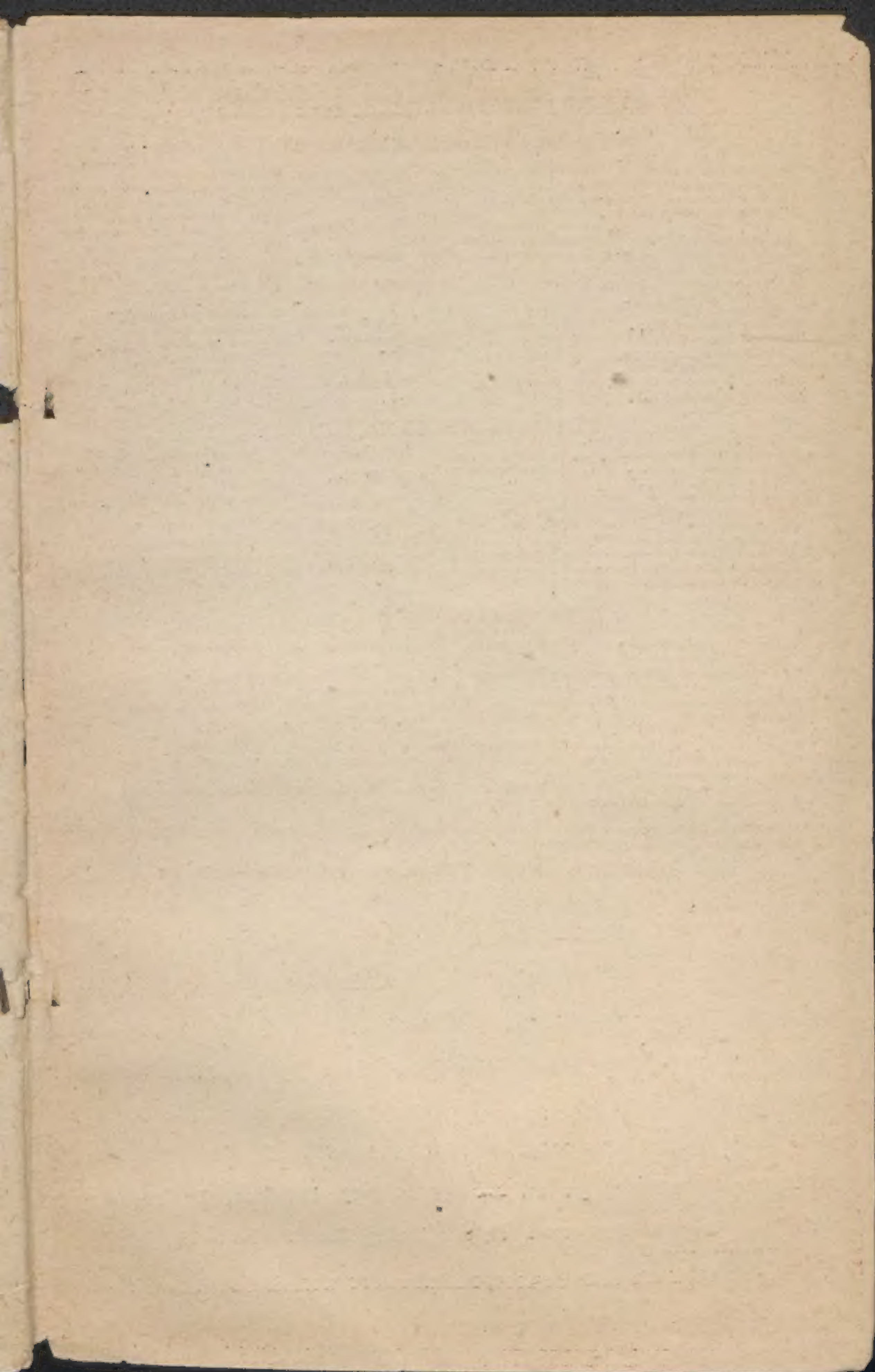
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